

NEW

What if...

Book of Alternative

British History

What if...

Henry VIII & Anne Boleyn
had a son?

What if...

The NHS act was
not passed?

Britain was
invaded?

Wales became
independent?

From the
makers of...

ALL ABOUT
HISTORY

Digital
Edition



FIRST
EDITION

Welcome to What if...

..... *Book of Alternative*

British History

The stories we encounter as we explore history are captivating. However, one irresistible question we are often left with is, "What if it happened differently?" In this new volume of *What if... Book of Alternative British History*, experts examine defining moments in the history of the United Kingdom, from Boudicca's rebellion to the birth of the National Health Service. Over the following pages, we ask eminent historians to explore an alternate reality, where Anne Boleyn gave birth to a son, the Gunpowder Plot had succeeded, the French Revolution spread to British shores, or where Edward VIII held onto his throne.

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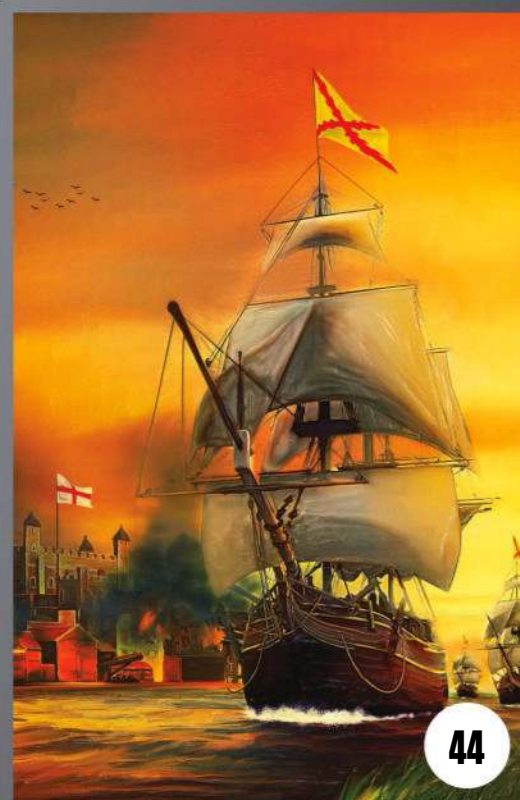
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What if...

BOUDICCA'S REVOLUTION HAD SUCCEEDED?

In 60-61 CE the queen of the Iceni tribe led a bloody rebellion that very nearly ended the Roman occupation of Britain

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Simon Elliott

Dr Elliott is a bestselling author, historian, archaeologist and broadcaster, with books such as *Roman Conquests: Britain*. In June 2022 he led his week-long tour 'Boudicca: Heroic Queen of Britannia' for Hidden History Travel.

At the time of Boudicca, the Roman occupation of 'Britannia' was relatively new, but there was already a form of peace and mutual acceptance, even co-existence, with many of the native tribes, the Iceni included. But the tiger will always use its claws, and the opportunity for Rome to increase its wealth, territory and power after the death of Iceni king Prasutagus in c.60-61 CE was too good to miss. The resulting violence and dishonouring of the Iceni sparked a revolt against the Romans that would settle the balance of power in Britannia for centuries to come.

How were the Boudiccan rebels able to initially defeat the Romans in the revolt the queen led in c.60-61 CE?

At the heart of this answer is the specific time when the Boudiccan Revolt broke out. This was effectively the halfway point in the Roman campaigns of conquests in Britain in the 1st century CE. This had begun with the Claudian invasion in 43 CE under Aulus Plautius which, by the end of that year, had established the capital of the new province in modern Colchester. (Previously Camulodunum, capital of the native British Catuvellauni.) It ended with Agricola's final campaign around 83 CE when he defeated the Caledonians at the Battle of Mons Graupius in the Grampians, and then ordered the Classis Britannica regional fleet to circumnavigate the main island of Britain. As each stage of conquest moved forward step by step from southeast to northwest, the Romans set up a series of 'stop lines' to allow them to plan their next advance.

Once ready, a new campaign then began. This is what was happening in the period immediately prior to the Boudiccan Revolt when, after a pause, the governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus began a new campaign to subjugate the northwest of Wales. His eye was off the ball to his rear when, after the death of their client king Prasutagus, Roman mistreatment of his Iceni tribe in north Norfolk led to Prasutagus' widow Boudicca leading her revolt. The Romans were caught cold because their legions were deployed so far away: legio XIV Gemina and legio XX Valeria Victrix were with Paulinus, legio II Augusta was in Exeter, and legio IX Hispana in was southern Lincolnshire. In

short, the Romans completely overplayed their hand in terms of civil government when trying to incorporate the territory of the Iceni into the province, and when things went badly for them they didn't have the available military resources to deal with the fall out.

How was Boudicca able to rally support for her cause?

Historians, ancient and modern, have often focused on the Iceni response to their disastrous rift with the Romans, but we should remember this was a new province, with the tribes of the south east subjugated longest. The nobility of the Trinovantes in southern modern Essex,



RIGHT

Governor Paulinus eventually defeated Boudicca and saved Rome's reputation

What if...
BOUDICCA'S REVOLUTION HAD SUCCEEDED?

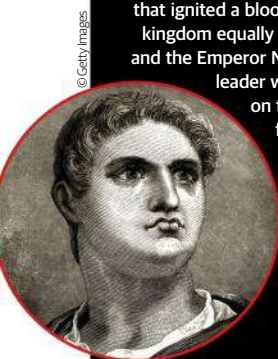


THE PAST

C.60-61 CE

THE DEATH OF PRASUTAGUS

Even though he may have had good intentions, what the Iceni King Prasutagus actually left as his legacy was the spark that ignited a bloody revolt. By leaving his kingdom equally between his daughters and the Emperor Nero (pictured), the Iceni leader wished for his reign to live on through his offspring and for the co-existence with the Romans to continue. But Prasutagus' faith in the future and in the Romans was dreadfully misplaced, and the emperor and his governor in Britannia had other ideas.



C.60-61 CE

ROME SNATCHES IT ALL

Not surprisingly, rather than comply with the wishes of the dead Iceni king, Rome decided to flex its considerable muscles and show who was boss. Simply ignoring the Iceni king's legacy, the Roman governor Paulinus annexed his lands and humiliated his people, (including his widow and daughters) through slaughter, torture and abuse. No thought or regard was given for any kind of fragile agreements or treaties. It was a reality check for the tribes of Britannia - Rome could just about do whatever it wanted.

C.60-61 CE

A QUEEN FIGHTS FOR HER HONOUR

The Iceni Queen Boudicca was incensed by the brutality of the Romans and their lack of honour towards her, her family and her people, and she rallied support among the Iceni and other tribes to rise up against the Romans. An army of tens of thousands plundered and destroyed Camulodunum (Colchester), then Londinium (London) and finally Verulamium (St Albans). As many as 80,000 Britons and Romans may have been killed in the fighting. The Roman governor Paulinus finally defeated Boudicca in what is known as the Battle of Watling Street (61 CE). Legend has it she poisoned herself rather than be captured, but her fate is unknown.



ABOVE
Boudicca inspired her people to rise up against Roman rule

RIGHT
Defeat would have made Emperor Nero's position even more fragile

the Catuvellauni to the west through to modern Hertfordshire, the Atrebates in the Thames Valley and the Cantiaci in Kent had all adopted Roman ways. They sponsored stone public buildings for the first time, sent their sons to Rome to be educated and wore togas when carrying out the new responsibilities of Roman civil government. All of this required funding in the form of loans to the aristocracy from the wealthy in Rome. This was burdensome for the leading Britons, and it seems as soon as a realistic opportunity presented itself to throw off the yoke of Rome the leading regional aristocrats did so, aligning their fate to that of Boudicca and the Iceni. The interesting question here is why did the Cantiaci not join the revolt? The answer is perhaps because they were at that time the most Romanised of the British tribes given their proximity to the continent.

If success against the Romans had continued would other tribes have joined in the revolt?

This is a very interesting question. I think we can be sure the Trinovantes,

Catuvellauni and most likely the Atrebates joined the Iceni, but did others? Certainly, when Paulinus began his forced march from Wales towards the southeast he was building marching camps for his troops at the end of each day's march. This indicates that although once into the Welsh Marches he was back in his province, he felt he was now in enemy territory once more given the conflagration taking place in East Anglia. At the very least this shows a distrust of the 'conquered' tribal confederations there, for example the Dobunni and Coritani. I believe these and others would then have joined the rebellion if the Romans had lost their decisive engagement with Boudicca after the sack of St Albans. That, of course, would be dependent on any Romans being left to rebel against after such a catastrophe.

How would a Roman defeat have changed the political and social makeup of Britain in the future?

Roman Britain was always the wild northwest of the empire. It was a place of difference because the far north was never fully conquered, and it required a huge military presence to maintain the northern border. I estimate that around 12% of the entire military establishment was in only 4% of the geographic area of the empire. If you add to this Britain's distance from Rome, and the fact it was separated from the continent by

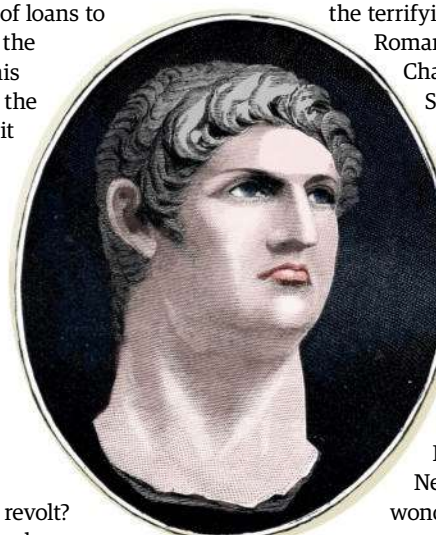
the terrifying Oceanus, as the Romans knew the English Channel and North

Sea, then you have one of the most marginal provinces in the empire.

On a number of occasions I think Roman emperors considered abandoning their occupation here, one certainly in the context of the

Boudiccan Revolt when Nero must surely have wondered if the province was worth the effort of holding.

To that end, if Paulinus had lost his decisive engagement I think that the Romans would have abandoned Britain, perhaps never to return. It is no coincidence that when Paulinus' order for Legio II Augusta to join him in the Midlands reached its stand-in-commander Poenius Postumus in Exeter, he refused to move. The reason? Just to the south was



the port of the legionary fortress, a fine harbour located at modern Topsham on the River Exe. The praefectus castrorum was making sure that he and his men could escape back to the continent if, as he expected, the governor was defeated.

Any Roman abandonment of Britain, especially in such shocking circumstances, would have had profound implications for later British history. It is very likely, given the youth of the province at this point, that the various tribal regions would have reasserted their territorial identities, including the reestablishment of their original borders. Internecine warfare would then have followed as each struggled for regional dominance, with perhaps Boudicca for a time being the most influential figure across the main island of Britain. Furthermore, given some have speculated Boudicca was actually born on the continent (for example among the Batavi in the Rhine Delta), an eventual victory for her in Britain may also have impacted the narrative of Roman dominance in the continental west.

With a united Britain would future invasions (for example by the Germans in the 4th and 5th centuries CE, and later the Vikings) have been less successful?

I don't think there was any chance at all that the native Britons would have united under one leader in the long term

in the wake of a Roman withdrawal. Much more likely, as I set out previously, would have been a return to the pre-Roman tribal identities, loyalties and borders. In short, normal service would have resumed.

What would defeat to Boudicca have meant to the reputation of the Roman Empire and Nero?

The emperor, the Roman political establishment and the Roman military all knew that the Boudiccan Revolt was a close run thing. They all knew that the great Emperor Augustus' lowest moment had been the loss of Varus' three legions to the Germans in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE, and the jeopardy in Britain in 60/61 CE was even greater, with four legions in danger and with an emperor far less secure in his position. In short, the Romans were acutely aware that any overall loss to Boudicca in Britannia would have been absolutely disastrous for them. You can see this in their response after Paulinus' final victory. This included drafting in 2,000 more legionaries from Germany together with 1,000 auxiliary cavalry and eight units of auxiliary foot to help stamp out the last flames of resistance to their occupation. This was then carried out with such vigour in the Iceni homelands of north Norfolk that the region remained for many years under-developed compared to the rest of the province.

BELOW
Rome's conquest of Britannia was nearly upended by Boudicca's rebellion



THE POSSIBILITY

61 CE – PRESENT

A VERY DIFFERENT POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Without the stability of Roman rule across the country, and tribes all following their own way of life, disputing their territories and settling regional feuds, a Roman departure would have left the country far more fragmented. It's even possible that the countries we know as England, Scotland and Wales would have taken far longer to emerge, or even not exist at all. The gradual emergence from all the regional tribes of a dominant kingdom that could grow into a single unified nation would have been much more difficult, leading to centuries of instability and almost constant regional wars.

61 CE – PRESENT

MUD HUTS NOT METROPOLIS

Roman Britain created the foundations of modern life, with towns and cities of stone buildings, well-connected by efficient roads criss-crossing the country. With a Roman withdrawal the regional tribes may well have settled back into their own traditional ways, even purposefully rejecting any Roman influence. The emergence of towns and cities may have taken many more centuries, and perhaps in a less structured way. With the empire's stay cut short by centuries its legacy and influence would now be a very faint and almost insignificant influence on Britain's development.



61 CE – PRESENT

KING, WHAT KING?

With political instability following a Roman withdrawal the likelihood of a strong ruler to unify the feuding tribes, each with its own king, into a single country under one ruler would have been far more remote. The very concept of monarchy and kingship as we know it today may well have taken many more centuries to develop and take hold. Rome itself developed into an imperial empire with a single family lineage at its head and this became the model for all future generations of rulers to follow. Without the example of the Romans, there may never have been Alfred the Great, the long line of Saxon kings, or the subsequent monarchs that were to rule over an increasingly unified country.

What if...

HAROLD WON AT HASTINGS?

Anglo-Saxon England sends the Normans packing, meaning a vastly different English language – and closer ties with Scandinavia

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr James Chetwood

Dr James Chetwood is an honorary research fellow at the University of Sheffield. He is a linguist and historian whose research focuses on the social, cultural and linguistic history of Britain and Europe in the Middle Ages.

What was the background to the Battle of Hastings in 1066? Who was vying for the throne?

Jump back to 1016, and there was a conquest of England by Danish kings, ending up with King Cnut being on the throne from 1016, an external power conquering and ruling England. Cnut's reign lasted until 1035, before Edward the Confessor became king in 1042. If we jump forward to 1065, Edward is childless, his wife Edith is the daughter of a Godwin, and

it's coming to the point where Edward's going to die without leaving an heir, and someone has to be king. There are various accounts of Edward promising the throne to different people. Supposedly he promised it to William the Conqueror [of Normandy], and that seems plausible that it did happen. But there's also accounts he promised it to Harald Hardrada, the King of Norway. And then finally just before he died, there's evidence he promised it to Harold Godwinson, and because he's by far

the strongest nobleman in England at the time, he had the power to take control of the throne.

What happened after Harold came to the throne in January 1066?

So Harold is given the throne, he says he has a claim to the throne, he's by far the most powerful person in the country, and has strong support in lots of areas. He's vital to the defence of England, and the council of noblemen in England agree that



RIGHT

A medieval manuscript showing the bloody aftermath of the Battle of Hastings

What if...
HAROLD WON AT HASTINGS?



Harold Godwinson
swings his axe and faces
down the Norman charge
at Hastings

What if... HAROLD WON AT HASTINGS

"It would have been difficult for William to win the battle"

he takes the throne and becomes king. He rules for about a year, but during that period William and Harald are pretty put out by this, and they both start hatching plans to invade England.

So Harold has to defend two fronts?

Yes, in early autumn of 1066, Harald Hardrada invades. They land on the north east coast and make their way to York, and they very nearly take it, until Harold marches north to meet them and defeats them at the Battle of Stamford Bridge [in September 1066].

And then he has to race south to face off with William the Conqueror in the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066. How did the battle play out?

Although Harold had been marching south, there were more men he could call on and there's enough of a force to get to the scene of the battle. They have the high ground at the top of a hill, William's men are very tired as well, as they've been waiting all night on guard, and they meet them at the bottom of the hill. Harold is in a good position, the battle starts in the morning and takes up most of the day. The Normans are fighting uphill to try and break the English lines and it's very difficult.

There's a certain point where the Norman forces start to run away and, by luck or a deliberate ploy, the English forces chase them down the hill. The Norman cavalry turns and, because the English line is broken, they can infiltrate their lines and defeat them. That's what turned the tide, and at some point in the ensuing melee Harold is killed.

It's said that Harold was expecting a reinforcement of Saxon troops in the evening. If he'd held out, could this have been a turning point?

Yes I'd have thought so. It was really a touch and go thing. If Harold had held out to the end of the day, which would have been perfectly possible because he did have the higher ground, and [the English] lines hadn't broken, it would have been difficult for William to win the battle. So that was a really big moment.

What would have happened if Harold had won the Battle of Hastings?

He would have just defeated two very

powerful enemies from two outside threats. So he would have been in a powerful position internally as well as externally. The Pope had supported William's claim to the throne and given him his banner in battle, but there's no reason why [Harold] wouldn't have carried on as king.

He would have been able to consolidate his rule over the winter and prepare against any future invasions.

Is there a chance of a Godwinian dynasty if he had won?

There's no reason why there wouldn't have been. There were rival earls in the country at the time, but they'd all acceded to his rule. So there's no reason why he couldn't have been an English king for a long time - and he already had five sons, so there were plenty of potential heirs.



LEFT

This medieval manuscript shows the Norman invasion force disembarking

ABOVE

Perhaps the most famous panel of the Bayeux Tapestry, believed to show Harold's death

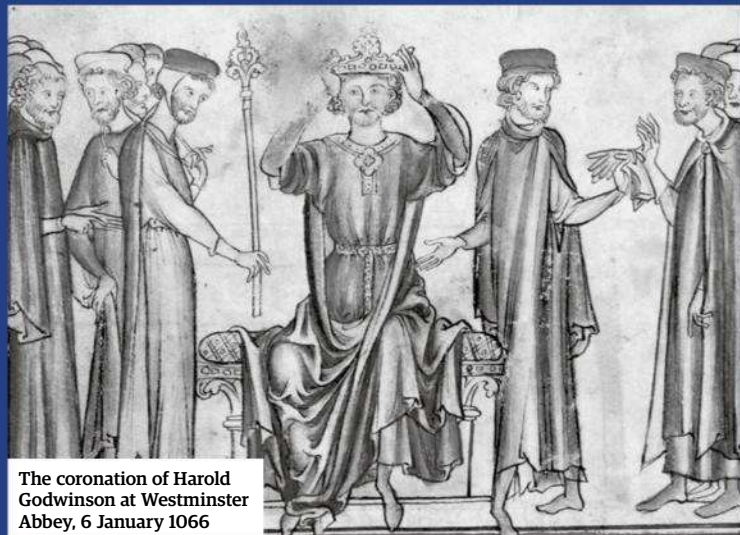




My Thegne is Earl

1066 had two profound consequences for England's powerful land-owning earls. Firstly those loyal to Harold Godwinson were decimated in the defeat at Hastings and their powerbases rich pickings for the Norman invader, secondly in the north those earls who stood apart from the fray due to their ties to the Norwegian claimant Harald Hardrada (many of them were of Anglo-Danish descent) represented a hostile bloc naturally resistant to Norman rule.

If Harold had won, he would have been wary of a fifth column in the north of England. Olaf III of Norway - Harald's son and successor - eventually made his peace with William the Conqueror, and Harold would have been wise to do the same, perhaps even marrying one of his daughters to the Norwegian king and giving him a stake in the English throne. That would have left the English king free to bring the northerners to heel in his own sweet time.



The coronation of Harold Godwinson at Westminster Abbey, 6 January 1066

What is one way the Normans changed English culture, and how would it have been different under King Harold?

It's often been argued that the Normans completely changed how we used names, bringing in the use of hereditary surnames and so on. I don't think this is the case. In reality, we'd probably be using the same system of naming, but with a very different set of given names and surnames. We'd almost certainly still have a lot of religious names like Mary, John, and Michael. But we wouldn't have many of the popular names that existed in England since like William, Robert, and Alice. Many English surnames like Chamberlain and Gascoigne wouldn't have made it into English.

Instead, there would almost certainly be more forms of Old English names in use today such as Godwin and Lefflet. And although the name 'Harold' wasn't that popular in 1066, it might have made some headway in the decades after Hastings had he been successful.

How would our language as a whole have been different?

English would have been very different had Harold won at Hastings. English passes from a prestige language to a lower status one for about 300 years, so we don't have as much record of it as we would otherwise. The language of the elite is French, including the language of poetry and literature. And England was very much

a part of the wider francophone literary world in this period. When it reappears as a written language of literature and poetry in the 14th century, it's a very different language - but one that is hugely adaptable.

Without the Normans to create the Domesday Book, the survey of England and Wales in 1086, would we still know as much about our country's history?

The English were actually pretty good at keeping historical records, but if it wasn't for the Norman conquest we'd know very little about Normandy.

There are very few written records about Normandy on the scale we see in England until 1066. The Domesday Book is a hugely important document, though, and we know a lot more about England and Normandy at this period because of it. And that wouldn't have happened without the Norman conquest.

It's unprecedented.

Is it possible that England could have been more closely tied to Scandinavia than mainland Europe if Harold had won the battle?

I think it's very feasible that, in the short term, England would have continued to have been more closely linked to Scandinavia. Harold's family was essentially Anglo-Scandinavian, Harold's mother was Danish, he had a Danish name, and he had

children called Ulf, Gytha and Magnus. His father, Godwin, owed much of his success and power to his patronage by Cnut (a Dane) and also his connections through his Danish wife. So continued close connections seem likely, even though he had just been attacked by the King of Norway.

Many changes [to England] would have had a much less Norman flavour if Harold had won, and England may have stayed far more in a Scandinavian sphere of influence. That said, Scandinavia was in the process of being incorporated into the wider Christian and Latin culture that they had been on the edge of until this point. They became part of Christendom and joined the club as it were.

So in the long run, England would certainly have still be part of this wider European, Christian culture - but it would probably have looked different in terms of its buildings and its language.

Finally, would Harold have been regarded as King Harold the Great for his victory?

The Godwin's were a self-made family. They went from relative obscurity to ruling England, one of the most powerful states in Europe at the time.

So there's no reason if he hadn't lost the battle that he wouldn't have been perceived as great. Whether he was great as a person, that's very hard to say.

What if...

RICHARD I AND SALADIN HAD INTERMARRIED?

An unusual proposition during the Third Crusade could have heralded peace in the Medieval Middle East

INTERVIEW WITH



**Helen
Nicholson**

Professor of Medieval History at Cardiff University, Helen Nicholson is a world-leading scholar on the Crusades and its military religious orders. Her research interests include women in the Crusades, the trials of the Knights Templar in Britain and the use of Medieval literature as historical evidence.

What was the cause of the Third Crusade from 1189 to 1192?

The immediate cause was the pope's call for the crusade after Saladin [the first sultan of Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Yemen] captured Jerusalem. We have a papal accord to the Christians to go to the aid of their fellow Christians in the East. It's a family matter as well because King Henry II of England was a cousin of the rulers of Jerusalem and Richard I [son of Henry II, king from 1189 to 1199] was a first cousin once removed - so it wasn't just a religious motivation.

What did Richard I, or Richard the Lionheart, hope to achieve by leading the Crusade into the Middle East?

Well, nobody actually said 'this is what our aims are' and so we have to assume them from letters sent back to the West and from what people did. On the basis of the papal accord, we reckon that they wanted to recapture Jerusalem. We also suspect that they wished to set up a regime in the East that would be agreeable to all concerned - that is to say the Latin Christians in the West and the Franks settled in the East. It also would have preferably been [a regime] that was at least acceptable to Saladin and his successors because they needed a peace treaty to hold the lands that they had recovered. They set up a new regime and they also managed to recapture some

coastal towns - but they didn't manage to regain Jerusalem.

What sort of ruler was Saladin and what were his motivations?

Saladin's quite difficult to get at because we have [Islamic] histories of him written by people who were quite anxious to assure everyone who read them that he was very spiritually minded, noble, heroic and a just ruler. While we can't deny any of these things, it would be nice to have an opposing view to give it a bit more balance.

There are people who regarded Saladin as a usurper, a conqueror, not the valid ruler. He spent most of his life fighting other Muslims to try and establish his regime, and throughout the Third Crusade he had to negotiate with his own army - and the various groups that made up his army - to hold them together. There were points where he had to let people go back home to get in the harvest or carry out their own business. He was having problems and so he had to keep winning victories to keep his army together.

How was the relationship between Richard the Lionheart and Saladin?

Contemporaries were interested in their continual sending of messages back and forth. The first thing Richard did [when he arrived] was to send a message to Saladin and open negotiations for peace. Of course,

according to both sides it was the other that started negotiations.

The Western sources were concerned about Richard's apparent friendship with Saladin although the two never actually met. But Saladin's brother, al-Adil, did go to meet Richard and this looked quite suspicious to Western writers.

On the other side, the picture was exactly the same if reversed. Sources around Saladin were very suspicious of Richard, thinking he was extremely clever, cunning and untrustworthy. They wanted to know what he was up to and they thought Saladin was being far too friendly.

It's quite amusing, if a little sad, to imagine both sides' outside commentators were so suspicious while the leaders were desperately trying to work around each other with detailed negotiations, very long-winded, spread out diplomacy, and the exchanging of gifts. Their relationship is described as friendly by some Western sources but I think mutual respect is probably a bit more accurate.

In 1191, Richard made an unusual proposition to marry his widowed sister Joan to Saladin's brother, al-Adil. What did Saladin make of this idea?

For a long time I thought it must be a myth introduced by Arab sources because the contemporary Western ones don't mention it at all. However, talking about it with two students of mine, we've decided that it could be true and it was probably a negotiating ploy by Richard. From the point of view of Saladin, this would not have been impossible - sultans had married Christian women before. Joan would have been allowed to keep her own religion so it

“ He was having problems and so he had to keep winning victories to keep his army together ”

RIGHT

The Third Crusade ultimately ended in a three-year truce and the Treaty of Jaffa

What if...
RICHARD I AND SALADIN HAD INTERMARRIED?



What if... RICHARD I AND SALADIN HAD INTERMARRIED?

wouldn't have been denigrating for either side. But they didn't trust Richard and they didn't know what he was up to. I'm sure their first reaction was, "He said what?! He can't mean that."

Why do you think Richard did it?

Why did Richard take Joan to the East with him from Sicily? He had his wife, Berengaria, with him, so he may well have taken Joan along to keep her company. But why didn't he send Joan back home with her mother, Eleanor, who came to Sicily to meet him?

The fact that Richard took Joan with him suggests he had something up his sleeve – perhaps he was thinking of setting up a dynasty out there. She could become queen of Jerusalem. What Joan says about this we don't know, because nobody bothered to record her opinion.

For the Western sources, particularly the Epics, it's all part of that great Hollywood romance – although of course it's not Hollywood, it's the Crusade Cycle. Why shouldn't she marry a Muslim prince who converts to Christianity? How seriously Richard meant it is now impossible to say. If he intended to completely floor his Muslim counterparts and leave them guessing as to what he might be up to, he certainly succeeded.

Why did the proposal not go ahead?

Saladin didn't know what to do with it. He seemed quite bewildered as to whether Richard could possibly have meant it. I can look up what it says in [*The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin* by Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād, a 12th-century Muslim scholar] about 21 October 1191: "The



essential basis of the agreement depends on al-Adil marrying the King of England's sister, who he brought with him from Sicily... the seat of the realm would be Jerusalem."

They went to Saladin and read it out, and Saladin "hastened to express approval of these terms, believing the King of England would not agree to them at all, and that it was intended to mock and deceive him." Saladin didn't believe it. So they went back to Richard and effectively called his bluff.

Then we come to 11 November, and the question is will al-Adil convert to Christianity, and the discussion is

continuing, and Saladin says he's happy with it. But now Richard has changed his mind. "The assembled Christian folk have criticised me for subjecting my sister to a Muslim without consulting the Pope. So I am now sending an envoy who will return in three months." This was the point at which negotiations broke down.

What would have happened if it had gone ahead?

Well, Muslim rulers had married Christians before. Of course, Muslims didn't have to have just one wife, so the Christian queen's children would then be in the position of

ABOVE

Even if the proposal had gone ahead, the debate over whether the bride or groom would convert religion risked derailing the marriage

How would it be different?

Real timeline

- **Third Crusade**
Pope Gregory VIII issues a call for a new Crusade to the Holy Land to recapture Jerusalem from the sultan Saladin. **1189**



- **Richard departs**
King Richard sets sail for the Middle East, where he immediately makes contact with his counterpart, Saladin. **1190**

- **The proposal**
Richard makes a bizarre proposal to Saladin – that the former's sister Joan marry the latter's brother al-Adil, uniting their families to broker peace. **October 1191**

Real timeline

- **No marriage**
Negotiations stall as both Richard and Saladin's advisers strongly encourage their leaders not to go ahead with the marriage. **December 1191**

Alternate timeline

- **Wedding bells**
Richard's proposal is accepted and his sister Joan weds Saladin's brother al-Adil in a stunning marriage of two different faiths. **November 1191**

not knowing whether they would succeed to rule Saladin's lands. I'm not sure anyone had thought it through that far.

Both sides would assume the other side could convert because, of course, each would have known that their religion was the most righteous and true. It's quite sweet the way contemporary literature of both sides reflects this belief and you look back over 800 years of history and think it's a shame, really - it would have been nice.

If it had gone ahead, if one side had been ready to convert to the other religion, they probably would have been stopped by their supporters because Muslims are not going to be happy to see al-Adil convert to Christianity, and likewise Richard's advisers are not going to be happy to see a Christian princess converted to Islam.

It would be like a peace treaty in the 1950s between the Soviet Union and the US that had required the US president's sister to convert to communism and marry Joseph Stalin. One feels it would have been unlikely to happen.

Would this unlikely marriage have brought an end to the Crusades?

Yes, it would have been the end of the Crusades as such. It would probably have been very good for trade, too - until the Mongols invaded [in the 1220s] and disrupted all the trade routes to the East, which would have happened anyway. Whether this new united kingdom could have stood against the Mongol invasion, I don't know.

What else might have been different?

There would have been peaceful pilgrimage into Jerusalem for people from Western

Europe and also for Muslims - and Jews, of course. The pilgrimage would probably have been easier for both sides. The end of the fighting might also have meant that trade would be easier. People's crops wouldn't be getting burned down all the time.

To judge from comments by people campaigning for Crusades in the 13th century, they made remarks like "we have to fight these people, we can't possibly make peace with them." It suggests there were quite a lot of people saying why don't we just make peace, rather than going to war. I think it would have been a good idea - but then I'm sitting here in the early 21st century. My values are not necessarily theirs.

How different would our modern view have been of this period?

Until very recently, scholars didn't really look at the peace negotiations at all or the attempts to bring people together as in the case of this one. The religious zealots on both sides had no interest in promoting the fact that people were trying to make peace.

So much of the literature that's come down to us emphasised the fact that war was necessary, whereas in fact when you go back and look at what people said at the time, there was a lot of talk about peace-making.

However, if we put that on the internet in the hope that it might generate positive discussion between Muslims



ABOVE
Richard I took over command of the English forces after the death of his father, Henry II

and Christians, you just get hate mail in response. All I got was people telling me from both sides there was no way anyone could make peace with this appalling infidel. That came from both sides. So I thought, oh, there's not much hope that peace is going to break out on this planet in the near future, unfortunately.

But things could have been different?

There is always hope that it could be different. It's particularly interesting that these people who were regarded as the foremost leaders of the holy war on each side were the people who were actually prepared to make peace. Unless they were both faking it.

"Whether this new united kingdom could have stood against the Mongol invasion, I don't know"

- **The Crusade ends**
Richard departs the Holy Land, having failed to recapture Jerusalem, but making inroads in a number of coastal regions. **October 1192**

- **Fourth Crusade**
Pope Innocent II calls for another excursion to the Holy Land, at first to recapture Jerusalem, but later to sack the city of Constantinople. **1202**



- **Mongols invade**
The Mongols sweep into the Middle East, disrupting trade heading east and causing havoc. **1220s**

- **Last Crusade**
The ninth and last Crusade comes to an end with Jerusalem still not recaptured and Muslims and Christians as divided as ever. **1272**

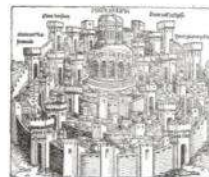


- **Death of Saladin**
Saladin dies of fever five months after Richard leaves, bringing their somewhat respectful relationship to an end. **March 1193**

- **Death of Richard**
Richard I dies of a rogue crossbow bolt wound during the siege of Chalus-Chabrol in Haute-Vienne, France. **April 1199**



- **Jerusalem defended**
The new kingdom of Jerusalem is able to withstand the Mongol invasion, keeping peace in the Middle East. **1220s**



- **Queen of Jerusalem**
Joan becomes queen of Jerusalem and, with the aid of her brother Richard, sets up a new regime in the kingdom. **December 1191**



- **Lasting peace**
With Jerusalem now partly under Christian control, the Crusades come to an end and the fighting between Richard and Saladin's sources ceases. **1192**

- **Trade deals**
Trade flourishes between Europe and the Middle East, with few skirmishes or broken alliances taking place between factions. **1193**

- **Richard lives**
Richard is never killed by a crossbow bolt at a castle in France and remains king for decades more. **1199**

- **Faiths aligned**
The Muslim and Christian faiths live in harmony 50 years after the marriage of Joan and al-Adil, who leave a dynasty in their wake. **1241**

What if...

THE GLYNDŴR' REBELLION HAD SUCCEEDED?

Owain Glyndŵr attempted to free Wales from the tyrannical grasp of the English but vanished into obscurity...

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Matthew Stevens

Dr Matthew Stevens is Associate Professor of History at Swansea University. He is an expert in medieval law and economics with one of his specialisms being the English conquest of Wales.

Between 1400 and 1415, Wales was in revolt. The proclaimed prince and leader of the rebellion was Owain Glyndŵr. He gathered armies of thousands and by 1404, much of Wales supported his uprising. However, the tide began to turn against him when King Henry IV ordered his son, the future King Henry V, to take troops and destroy the Welsh rebels. Even French reinforcements proved unable to help Glyndŵr and in 1415 he disappeared, never to be seen again. But just how close to victory was the Prince of Wales? And what would his triumph have meant for the future of not only Wales as an independent nation, but the United Kingdom?

Who was Owain Glyndŵr?

By 1284, the English conquest of Wales was effectively complete but in 1295, there was an attempted rebellion. Following this, many of the Welsh elite that had aligned themselves with the English were dispossessed. At this point, there are almost no Welsh Lords or independent noble Welsh land owners left in Wales; it's almost all in the possession of somebody who's effectively ethnically English. Glyndŵr is from an anomalous small group of Welsh families that have somehow managed to hang on to their land. The rest is in Marcher lordships, which are legally autonomous micro-kingdoms created through individual conquests, or the English king's royal principality. Glyndŵr has blood in his veins from two of the four princely lines in Wales - so he has strong Welsh pedigree. Prior to the revolt

he was fairly unremarkable and acted largely in the manner expected of a person of his standing. As a young man, he went to London to train in the Inns of Court with lawyers, as it was considered good for property-owning gentlemen to be versed in the law - even if Welsh law had numerous differences to English law. He then served the king on campaign, taking men from Wales to fight against the Scots. Until Richard II was deposed, Glyndŵr was a kind of typically middle of the road, moderately wealthy, loyal to the crown, gentleman.

What led to his revolt against the English?

There are generally thought to be two reasons behind his revolt. First is the treatment he receives from his neighbour, Reginald de Grey. North of his own estate is a Marcher lordship owned by de Grey and he and Glyndŵr have

a dispute about a strip of land running between the two properties. De Grey confiscates Glyndŵr's property without any proper justification. When Glyndŵr is then summoned by the king to go on campaign in August 1400, Reginald de Grey intercepts this message and stops it from reaching Glyndŵr. The king now believes that Glyndŵr has rebelled by refusing to fulfill his obligation as a major land owner to provide military service and troops. The second reason relates to poetry. At the time, poets would travel between the various aristocratic households and essentially sing for their supper. Poet Iolo Goch, for example, visits Glyndŵr's estate at Sycharth in Powis and proclaims Glyndŵr "our nation's lord... best of Welshmen". He is repeatedly told things like "you're the greatest of all princes" and "you shall be the salvation of Wales". This is a time when there's a lot of social



RIGHT
The 1404 parliament of Owain Glyndŵr

Getty Images, Alamy

What if...
THE GLYNDŴR REBELLION HAD SUCCEEDED?



THE PAST

1401

THE SACRIFICE OF LLYWELYN AP GRUFFYDD FYCHAN

In Llandoverly, Wales, there can be found an imposing 16ft tall steel monolith. This statue is in honour of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd Fychan, a Welsh landowner and member of the gentry who supported Owain Glyndŵr during the rebellion. Purportedly, when the English forces arrived at his castle, he offered to show them the rebel's hiding place. Instead, however, Llywelyn spent days leading the troops on a merry chase across Wales whilst Glyndŵr was able to escape. When Henry IV discovered Llywelyn's trickery, he had him disembowled and beheaded. Pieces of his remains were sent across Wales as a warning to others.



1405

VIOLENT RETRIBUTION

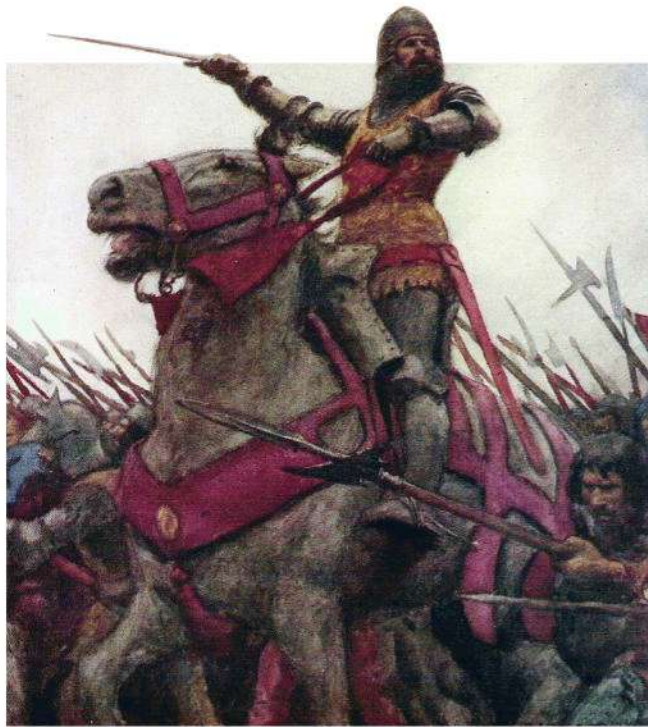
One of the key turning points of the rebellion was the Battle of Pwll Melyn, where Glyndŵr's forces, led by his brother Tudur and his son Gruffydd, were defeated. It was an intensely bloody conflict in which Glyndŵr's army suffered great losses. Following the battle, in which Tudur was killed, Gruffydd was captured and sent to the Tower where he would later die. Accounts state that 300 of Glyndŵr's surviving troops were marched to nearby Usk castle. Here, all of them were beheaded in a brutal demonstration that such resistance by Glyndŵr and others would not be tolerated.



1536-43

THE ACTS OF UNION

In 1536, and later between 1542-3, Henry VIII passed the Acts of Union. These laws bound Wales to England and among their key points, made English the primary language of Wales. These acts also abolished the Marcher lordships and established a system of counties across Wales.



ABOVE LEFT

Owain Glyndŵr has been celebrated in art and literature since his disappearance in 1415

ABOVE RIGHT

Harlech castle in Wales, where Glyndŵr kept his base of operations during the revolt



unrest in Wales; the Welsh pay higher taxes than the English and they have fewer legal rights. When Glyndŵr suffers this indignity from his neighbour, always hearing this prophecy - well, he seems to finally snap.

What were the aims of the revolt?

There are different opinions on this. The first thing he does, in September 1400, is burn down the town of Ruthin, where Reginald de Grey has a castle and base of operations - even a Welsh mistress. This is interesting because by 1400, there were a whole host of towns in which Welsh people were legally forbidden from owning property. Ruthin, however, is probably the most ethnically integrated town in all of north Wales. Half of the people living there were Welsh. So when Glyndŵr attacked he probably burnt as many Welsh people's homes as he did English! That's really important when you are trying to understand his initial intent. Looking at it this way, it does seem as if he just wanted revenge on his neighbour before events spiralled.

The other argument is that he really had become convinced that he could be the salvation of the Welsh. The evidence for this is that at his manor of Glyndyfrdwy, just a few days before he burns Ruthin down, he holds a little ceremony before local notables, extended family and the Welsh dean of St Asaph's Cathedral. He's proclaimed the Prince of Wales and of all Welsh people and then he goes to attack de Grey. It does appear like a genuine attempt to create a national uprising.

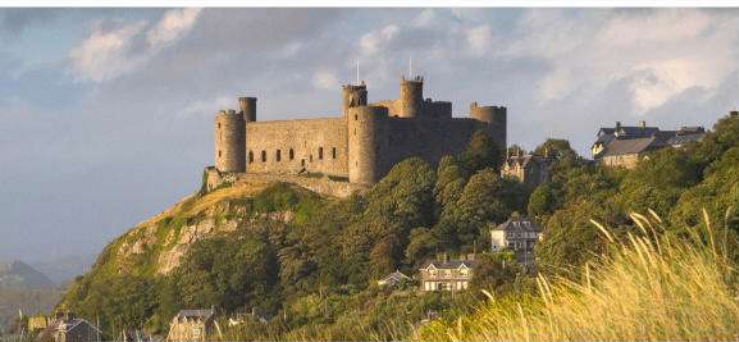
BELOW

A 19th-century depiction of Owain Glyndŵr in his armour



Is there a turning point where, if things were different, the revolt could have succeeded?

[That would be] 21 July 1403. Henry IV had by then dispatched his son, the future king Henry V, to Shrewsbury on the Welsh border with a force of English troops. Sir Henry Percy, often known by the name 'Hotspur', initially tolerated Richard II being deposed in 1399, and had even been appointed by Henry IV to quell rebellion in north Wales, but by 1403, he himself rebelled. Hotspur is travelling through Shrewsbury with a force of men in an attempt to remove Henry IV from the throne. Although Hotspur was defeated and slain at Shrewsbury, there was a formal agreement drawn up called the Tripartite Indenture between Glyndŵr, Hotspur's father and another noble, Sir Edmund Mortimer, in 1405. This agreement would have divided England in two, as well as given Wales a form of independence, and it's what we assume was in people's minds back in 1403. It's rumoured Glyndŵr had promised Hotspur reinforcement. In theory, if he had waited until Glyndŵr turned up, things could have turned out much differently. But the reason he is named 'Hotspur' is because of his reputation for rushing recklessly into battles and, of course, he loses. By the time Glyndŵr could reasonably get there, it's all over. If Hotspur had waited for Glyndŵr and they had defeated the Royal Army in 1403, there's every possibility that it might have spiralled out of control for Henry IV.



If this had occurred, what might have happened?

Wales probably would have ended up resembling a semi-autonomous principality like Luxembourg or Lichtenstein. But in the long run, I doubt it would have lasted. By the time Henry VIII is on the throne, he is re-invading and conquering Ireland again - it's likely he might have done the same to Wales. He also probably would have had the support of the Marcher lords, as almost all of them had bigger, even wealthier estates back in England. It's likely that they could have joined forces and re-subjugated Wales at any point. The chance that you would have a sympathetic king in England, who would support the rolling back of the private property rights of all of those people who possessed roughly two-thirds of Wales in the form of these micro-kingdoms - it was never going to happen.

What might Wales have looked like if Glyndŵr had succeeded?

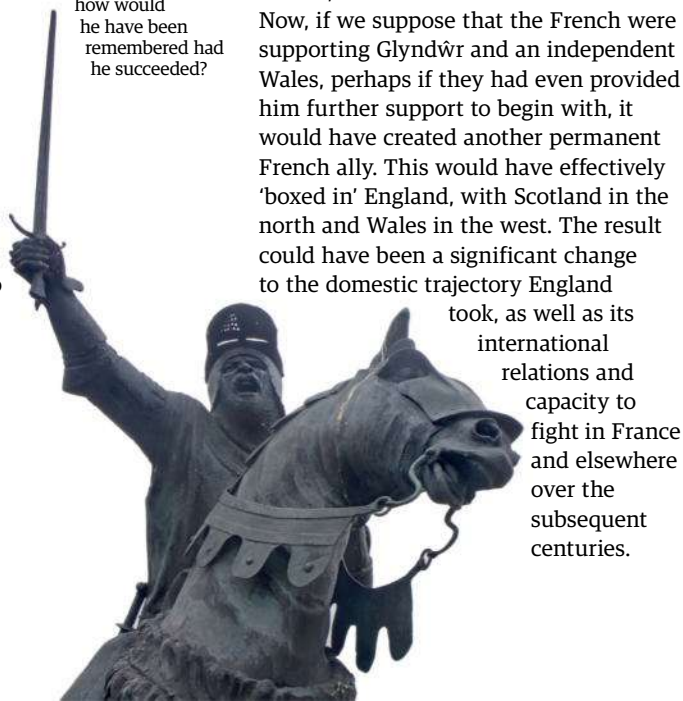
So the question here is, how do we define success? As already discussed, realistically it might have been in the

ABOVE

Hotspur died during the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403 - if he had joined forces with Glyndŵr could they have defeated the English forces?

BELOW

Owain Glyndŵr is still celebrated today as a Welsh hero, so how would he have been remembered had he succeeded?



restoration of a kind of principality. This may probably have only been a third of Wales as we know it today, something resembling the Welsh principality as it had been back in the 1270s. The other form of success would be the entirety of the geographical area of Wales coming into Welsh control. And as the rebellion went on, Glyndŵr began to openly aspire to that. In 1405, Glyndŵr had even successfully solicited the French to send over a small fighting force, which landed at Milford Haven in south Wales. And by 1406, even as things started to go wrong militarily, he began to make grander plans, openly talking about establishing two universities in Wales and a form of Welsh parliament. If all this had occurred, what would have happened to the English people in Wales? A minority of the population - maybe one-fifth of the population - living disproportionately in towns are English. Glyndŵr is repeatedly accused of plotting "the extinction of the whole English language" in Wales, which he indirectly denies in 1402, but he does openly attack the English people in Wales. There are about 100 towns in Wales and 40 of them are burned. There were no towns in Wales prior to the arrival of the English back in the 11th century. By 1400, they were mostly where English people lived. The question is would Glyndŵr have carried out a campaign against the English population of Wales? It's difficult.

Could Britain's enemies, such as France, have capitalised on this?

Scotland maintains its independence, in some part, because it has the so-called 'Auld Alliance' between Scotland and France, from 1295 to the mid-1500s. Now, if we suppose that the French were supporting Glyndŵr and an independent Wales, perhaps if they had even provided him further support to begin with, it would have created another permanent French ally. This would have effectively 'boxed in' England, with Scotland in the north and Wales in the west. The result could have been a significant change to the domestic trajectory England took, as well as its international relations and capacity to fight in France and elsewhere over the subsequent centuries.

THE POSSIBILITY

1400-15

A WELSH LEGAL SYSTEM?

Cyfraith Hywel or 'The Law of Howel', is the Welsh system of law established by Hywel Dda around the 10th century. These laws have survived due to a number of remaining 13th century manuscripts. In 1535 and 1542, King Henry VIII passed the Laws in Wales Acts, which ended the practice of Cyfraith Hywel and imposed the English legal system instead. Could Cyfraith Hywel have formed the basis of the dominant legal system in an independent Wales?



1404

A WELSH PARLIAMENT?

Owain Glyndŵr is credited with holding the first Welsh parliaments in Machynlleth in 1404 and Harlech in 1405. In 1997, devolution referendums were held in Scotland and Wales. 50.3% voted for the creation of a Welsh National Assembly and its first session was held two years later, on 12 May 1999. In 2006, the Welsh Government Act devolved further governing and law making powers to the National Assembly. On St David's Day that same year, Queen Elizabeth II opened the Senedd, the Welsh Parliament Building, during a lavish ceremony. Would we have seen further Welsh parliament's held sooner had Glyndŵr succeeded?

1415

WHAT HAPPENED TO OWAIN GLYNDŴR?

Following the suppression of the Glyndŵr rebellion, its leader and namesake appears to have vanished. Owain's son, Maredudd, continuously refused Henry V's offer of a pardon until 1421, possibly upon the event of his father's death. However, according to the Owain Glyndŵr Society, the date commonly given for his death is 1415 and this is documented in a number of contemporary sources. However, despite many possible locations having been suggested, Glyndŵr's burial site remains a mystery. Glyndŵr's disappearance is an important part of the legend surrounding him, but how would he be remembered if the rebellion had continued?



What if...

RICHARD III HAD LIVED?

After neutralising the Tudor threat, Richard III looks to cement his place on the throne through marriage

INTERVIEW WITH



Matt Lewis

Matt Lewis is an author and historian specialising in Medieval history. His most recent book is a biography of Edward IV and Richard III's father, *Richard, Duke Of York: King By Right*. His next book is a biography, titled *Henry III: Son Of Magna Carta*.

King Richard III lost the Battle of Bosworth on 22 August 1485, and with his death, 331 years of Plantagenet rule ended and the Tudor dynasty was born. For more than a century the Tudors went on to reshape England. Richard III remains a man who divides opinion, often bitterly. So how different might England have been if the Yorkist king had succeeded and Henry Tudor had died that day?

With the last threat to his throne extinguished, Richard returns to his plans. Embassies step up negotiations to marry the widowed king to Joanna of Portugal, sister to King John II, and his niece Elizabeth of York to John's cousin, Manuel. The deeply religious Joanna had turned down the king of France but pressure from her brother encourages her to agree to marry Richard. In 1487, Joanna arrives in England with her cousin for a double wedding. The Lancastrian blood of the Portuguese royal family is joined to Richard's Yorkist line, uniting the red and white roses.

King Richard continues the work of his first parliament, taking his vengeance on the nobility who failed to support him at Bosworth while promoting the causes of the common and merchant classes. Many of the great families of England are lost, with only a small number of Richard's supporters rewarded, but trade flourishes as the general population feel more enfranchised. With the birth of a son, named Richard, in 1489, the king's dynastic confidence grows. As plans for a war against France progress, his efforts are frustrated by a lack of nobles to provide feudal levies for mercenaries as Scotland uses the Auld Alliance to create trouble on the northern borders.

Exploration features highly in England's outlook as English ships are requested to help in his voyages along the African coast. When Columbus returns from his voyage to discover America in 1493, the Treaty of Tordesillas splits new discoveries between Spain, Portugal and England. Trade blossoms further in England with new

routes opening up, no fractious nobility to threaten internal security and a rising middle class. The English fleet focuses west, seeking to exploit the opportunities of the New World.

In 1495, Portugal's King John dies without a legitimate heir and is succeeded by Manuel with Elizabeth as his queen. The couple have several children and make strong matches across Europe. Richard's inflexibility causes friction between England, Portugal and Spain as the vast wealth of the New World sows seeds of discord. The rest of his life is spent trying to protect the flow of treasure from the west from increasing French piracy.

Richard III dies in 1509, succeeded by his son Richard IV. As the Reformation sweeps across Europe, the influence of Richard IV's parents keeps England Catholic in alliance with Portugal and Spain. Protestant nations support French efforts and the alliance turns France away from Rome, leaving the centre of Europe Protestant, encircled by Catholic nations, leading to years of conflict.

How would it be different?

Real timeline

1485

● Crossing the channel

Henry Tudor sails from France with up to 5,000 men and lands on the English shore unopposed.
7 August 1485

● The battle begins

The Yorkist army under Richard III faces off against the outnumbered Lancastrians led by Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond.
22 August 1485

● Death of Richard

After a failed cavalry charge, Richard III becomes the last English king to meet his death on the battlefield.
22 August 1485

Real timeline

● Henry is crowned

Henry Tudor is crowned Henry VII of England in Westminster Abbey. He rewards those who fought for him at Bosworth.
30 October 1485

● Wedding bells

Henry VII honours his pledge to marry Elizabeth of York, uniting the red and white roses. They were third cousins.
18 January 1486



Alternate timeline

● The Battle of Bosworth

Henry Tudor is killed by a cavalry charge led by King Richard III. The final threat to the Yorkist crown is extinguished.
22 August 1485

● King Richard's second parliament sits

Laws promoting trade and justice are again published in English and a weakened nobility cannot oppose the measures.
January-March 1486

What if... RICHARD III HAD LIVED?



● A pretender appears

Perkin Warbeck, a young Fleming, claims to be a 'Prince in the tower'. His rebellion fails and he is executed.

1490

● A king is born

Henry VII's second son, also called Henry, is born. He will go on to become Henry VIII, one of England's most famous monarchs.

28 June 1491

● Henry VII passes on

Henry VII dies of tuberculosis at Richmond Palace and is buried at Westminster Abbey. His son Henry succeeds him.

21 April 1509

● A new queen

Henry VIII shocks the Christian world by annulling his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and marries his latest fancy, Anne Boleyn.

1 June 1533

● Acts of Supremacy

Henry VIII, and all subsequent monarchs, become head of the Church of England. This is the beginning of the English Reformation.

3 November 1534

● Birth of Prince Richard

Queen Joanna gives birth to a son named Richard. The Yorkist king's dynastic security grows, increasing his authority at home.

February 1489

● Joint Settlements establishing in West Africa

England joins Portuguese voyages of exploration and a settlement at São Tomé and Príncipe provides a platform for colonisation of Africa.

1491-93

● Death of King John II

John II, known as the Perfect Prince, dies. Richard tries to negotiate the crown for his son, but Manuel's primogeniture claim wins.

25 October 1495

● Pacific Ocean reached

England beats the Spanish to the Pacific Ocean and dominates North and Central American colonisation, increasing the nations' wealth.

1512

● A royal wedding

Princess Joanna of Portugal arrives to marry Richard III. Her cousin Manuel accompanies her to marry Richard's niece, Elizabeth of York.

May 1487

● Birth of Prince Richard

Queen Joanna gives birth to a son named Richard. The Yorkist king's dynastic security grows, increasing his authority at home.

February 1489

● Columbus returns home

The Treaty of Tordesillas splits new territories three ways, between Spain, Portugal and its increasingly important naval partner England.

4 March 1493

● Richard III dies

At the age of 57, Richard III dies at Windsor and is buried in the mausoleum his brother established there. Richard IV is crowned.

21 April 1509

● The Reformation fails

The influence of Richard IV's mother and ties with Portugal and Spain keep England Catholic. The Reformation succeeds in France.

1517

What if...

HENRY VII HAD BEEN OVERTHROWN?

When Henry VII became king, plots were in place and pretenders eagerly eyed England's throne. What if one of them had succeeded?

INTERVIEW WITH



Nathen Amin

Nathen Amin is a historian and researcher from Carmarthenshire, Wales, whose work focuses on the reign of Henry VII and the 15th century in general. His books include *The House Of Beaufort* and *Henry VII And The Tudor Pretenders: Simnel, Warbeck And Warwick*.

Why, early in his reign, are there so many attempts to depose Henry VII?

Perhaps amongst all the medieval kings of England, Henry VII was the unlikeliest figure to ever sit upon the English throne. A minor noble of Welsh, French and English extraction, he was forced into exile as a boy, and though directly descended from Edward III, by the end of the 15th century this was hardly exceptional amongst his peers.

Even as late as the morning of the Battle of Bosworth on 22 August 1485, Henry remained a figure of convenience for many rebels in the struggle to overcome the royal forces of Richard III, who had risen to the throne just two years prior amid allegations he had murdered his nephews, the so-called Princes in the Tower. Certainly the odds of Henry succeeding at Bosworth with his disparate force of Lancastrian veterans, Yorkist dissidents and foreign mercenaries against a superior royal army were slim, and it's true to suggest his victory was only really sealed by Stanley's betrayal of Richard III. It was Richard's loss rather than Henry's win.

When Henry became king, therefore, his reputation and his character were unknown to the vast majority of the subjects he now sought to rule. He had left home at 14, condemned as a rebel, and now at 28 years old, stood before them as their saviour. It's not difficult to believe there would have been a degree of cynicism in houses and taverns throughout the realm.

Between 1461 and 1485, no fewer than four kings had been deposed, twice in Henry VI's case. This recent history

amid wide-scale collapse of law, order and royal authority put Henry VII at a distinct disadvantage when he ascended the throne. Though we're blessed with the hindsight of how Henry VII's reign ultimately unfolded, at the time there was surely widespread expectancy that this was to be another short stint on an increasingly unstable throne.

This pattern of replacing kings was threatening to become endemic, and with other, arguably more viable, candidates for the throne still living, the wheels of conspiracy were already turning against Henry VII. Yorkist infighting survived the Tudor

ascendancy, as some of those now out in the cold sought to reverse the Battle of Bosworth. With nothing to lose but everything to gain, history gave a new generation of dissidents confidence to make a move.

Who was Lambert Simnel?

Lambert Simnel was the first pretender to the throne positioned against Henry VII in 1487, less than two years into the new Tudor reign. Rumours around court in spring 1487 suggested that a conspiracy was afoot in support of the 12-year-old Edward, Earl of Warwick, a Yorkist prince and nephew of both



RIGHT The tomb of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York

© Getty Images

Main image sources: © Getty Images

What if...

HENRY VII HAD BEEN OVERTHROWN?



THE PAST

1483

THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER

Edward and his brother Richard were the sons of Edward IV. Traditionally, the record states that the young princes were escorted to the Tower of London by their uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Actually quite a luxurious residence, the boys quickly disappeared and rumours abound that their wicked uncle had conspired to have them smothered in their sleep. These events were later used by Shakespeare as part of his theatrical take of *Richard III* and further cemented the mystery of the princes.

1485

BATTLE OF BOSWORTH

The last significant battle of the War of the Roses, the Battle of Bosworth was the final stand of Richard III. Sailing across the channel from France with a force of 2,000 men, Henry's Lancastrian army had almost doubled in size by the time they had marched from Wales and crossed the border into Shrewsbury. However, when facing a royal force that was nearly 10,000-strong the odds of Henry winning were initially somewhat slim. Watching the Battle was Lord Stanley, a nobleman and a remarkably shrewd one at that. He'd been complicit in Richard III's accession but when the forces of Henry landed, Stanley ignored requests from the king for assistance. As soon as Henry's army began to edge towards victory, Stanley's force of 6,000 backed them up. Perhaps seeing the battle was lost, Richard III charged at his enemy directly. He fought for some time, but was finally subdued.

1487

THE REAL LAMBERT SIMNEL

Following his defeat and capture, Simnel was not imprisoned in the Tower of London and executed as might be expected, but was instead sent to work in the royal kitchens as a lowly scullery boy. However, as Simnel was so well-behaved and so keen to please, he was quickly promoted to the role of a page before finally being given the task of looking after the king's falcons, an extremely important role.

Edward IV and Richard III. Though Henry VII had the real earl firmly under lock and key in the Tower of London, the conspiracy leaders instead claimed they had the boy in their care. On 24 May 1487, this mysterious boy was crowned King Edward in Dublin and England was invaded by an army featuring a few Yorkist nobles who had previously been loyal to Richard III, many Irish lords and a contingent of German mercenaries. Their plan outwardly appears to have been to kill Henry VII and replace him on the throne with the Yorkist Edward of Warwick, though it's unclear how they planned to explain away two Warwicks!

The plot failed when a Tudor royal army accomplished at the Battle of Stoke Field what Richard III had failed to do at Bosworth, and that was to defeat the invaders. The imposter prince was captured and it was determined through investigation that his name was Lambert Simnel, a tradesman's son from Oxford who'd been trained by a wayward priest. Rather than face execution, the boy was put to work in the royal kitchens, living deep into the reign of Henry VIII.

Who was Perkin Warbeck?

Who was Warbeck, indeed? This is the question that continues to divide students of history 521 years after his death. In 1491, four years after the Simnel plot failed, word reached the English court that another pretender had surfaced in Ireland, this time claiming to be Richard, Duke of York, the younger of the Princes in the Tower. Unlike the captive Warwick, no-one knew what had happened to the sons of Edward IV, and though presumed dead, rumours nevertheless abounded that perhaps one had in fact survived. This was problematic for Henry VII, whose entire

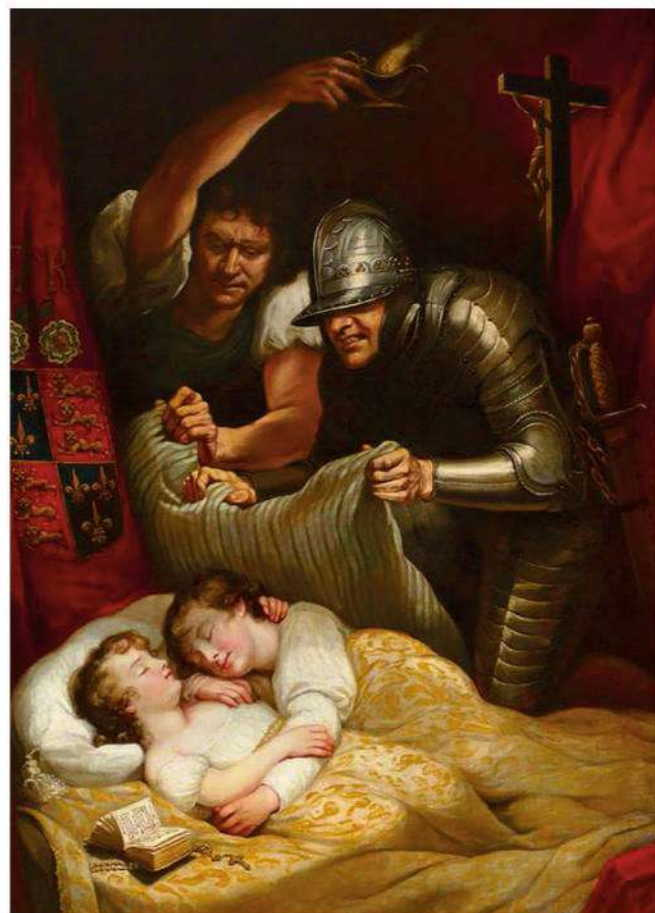


Image source: wiki/The National Trust

"The imposter was spared execution and put to work in the royal kitchens"

ABOVE The two princes in the tower were allegedly murdered, but was Perkin Warbeck in fact Richard, Duke of York?

LEFT Lambert Simnel being carried through the streets as the 'rightful king'

reign was based on the premise that the younger brothers of his wife, Elizabeth of York, were dead.

This pretender, 'Prince Richard', claimed he had been spared death by a compassionate assassin and taken abroad until it was time to reclaim his lost birthright. Between 1491 and 1497, the Yorkist pretender gained support from various European powers who sought to unsettle Henry VII for their own purposes, including France, Burgundy and Scotland. One particular key ally was Margaret of York, the sister of Edward IV and Richard III and who, as the pretender's 'aunt', championed his cause.

The pretender's campaign ultimately floundered and he was captured by Henry VII in 1497. During interrogation, he confessed that his name was Pierrehon Werbecque and he was a native of Tournai. Though initially afforded some degree of leniency, the pretender was executed two years later after a thwarted escape attempt. There



Image source: wiki/Encyclopædia Britannica

is ample evidence to suggest Warbeck's confession that he was an imposter was true, but the debate about his real identity rumbles on.

How close to success did either of these two come?

History teaches us that Henry VII died a wealthy and insuperable king in 1509, a king who oversaw the first peaceful transferral of power from father to son in 87 years. He succeeded where predecessors such as Edward IV and Richard III had failed, and it is accurate to state that Henry overcame every challenge to his crown with little serious difficulty, not least the Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck affairs. This is not to diminish the very real threat Henry would have felt as events developed, however, acting without the benefit of hindsight and knowing how his story would end.

In hindsight, none came close to toppling the Tudor regime from the throne. Simnel likely had the best chance as he brought the king to the battlefield at Stoke in 1487, where subtle changes in loyalty or even the weather could determine the victor on the day. In the event, the royal army crushed its opponent with little incident. Warbeck

BELOW
Henry VII is crowned king by Stanley on Bosworth Field

enjoyed some diplomatic success abroad but it was always fleeting, and he failed multiple times invading England. As for Warwick, he spent the majority of his life cooped up in a chamber. Although his name resonated for a handful of Yorkist loyalists, he was regarded with little importance by the wider public who, it seems, just got on with life.

If any of these challengers had seized the throne, what could the immediate effect have been?

Further war and bloodshed. The country was splintered and there certainly wasn't a consensus behind any one candidate. It is likely further destabilising of the crown would have resulted in continuing chaos as factions within the houses fought with one another. Henry VII's ultimate victory was being able to steady the ship somewhat by the time of his death, and it's difficult to believe others would have been as successful.

What was Henry's legacy as a ruler?

Henry VII's ultimate legacy is that England was freed of the widespread disorder and war which had reduced crown authority throughout the 15th century. Although Shakespeare and much of history has portrayed his unlikely victory at Bosworth in 1485 as the moment Henry brought the Wars of the Roses to a close, it is more accurate to consider his death at 1509 as the date the wars ended. By securing the Tudor succession, the first peaceful transferral of power from father to son in 87 years, Henry left behind a popular dual-descended Yorkist and Lancastrian heir on the throne in Henry VIII. The Wars of the Roses were over.

If one of the pretenders had succeeded, what could their wider legacy have been?

That's an impossible question to answer, though I suspect they would have been short reigns marked by violence and war. Henry VII was only able to succeed due to his fairly widespread support in 1485, whether because of his character or his Yorkist marriage, and he possessed an intelligence that marked him out from his peers. He was circumspect, far-sighted and driven by his unique experience prior to becoming king. Would any of the other three have been able to match Henry's accomplishments? Or rather become failed short-term royal experiments as England descended into greater turmoil than ever before?

THE POSSIBILITY

1483

WERE THE PRINCES REALLY DEAD?

Fans of conspiracy theories can add another, historical one to their list as Henry's actions surrounding Perkin Warbeck have raised several questions. Firstly, there's no recorded evidence of Henry investigating the fate of the two princes, nor any suggestion of a search of the tower occurring. Others have questioned how close Elizabeth Woodville's loss of property and removal to Bermondsey Abbey were to Lambert Simnel's appearance and if they can truly be coincidences. Indeed, one school of thought has gone further and suggested that in fact Simnel claimed to be one Edward V and not Edward, Earl of Warwick, with this claim being constructed by Henry VII, who could parade the real Warwick, but would have no such luck with Edward.

There is plentiful evidence to this theory, including accounts by poet Bernard André and Henry VII's eagerness to destroy the records of the Irish Parliament. Did he perhaps destroy something else with them?



1485

THE CONTINUED WAR OF THE ROSES?

Under the rule of Henry VII, the House of York could have perhaps expected numerous repercussions, but the king was shrewd enough not to anger the nobles and provoke further threats to his place on the throne. Margaret, daughter of the Duke of Clarence, was married to one of Henry's oldest supporters - possibly to prevent her being used in a Yorkist rebellion. Perhaps the most unfortunate was Edward, Earl of Warwick, who had he been given his freedom could have similarly been used as a focal point for rebellion. While his imprisonment was likely not too unpleasant, he would eventually be executed alongside Perkin Warbeck for attempting to escape. There is some suggestion this was in fact requested by Spanish monarchs before Katherine was to be given to the Tudors. Had a pretender seized the throne, it's unsure how the Houses of York and Lancaster would have continued.

Image source: wiki/National Museum Warsaw



© Getty Images

What if...

ARTHUR TUDOR LIVED?

If Henry VIII's elder brother had become king, England might have fought against the Protestant Reformation and allied with Spain to colonise America together

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Sean Cunningham

A fellow of the Royal Historical Society and head of the Medieval Records team at the National Archives, Sean Cunningham is the author of *Prince Arthur: The Tudor King Who Never Was* and has also written biographies of Henry VII and Richard III.

Who was Prince Arthur Tudor?

The long-hoped-for heir of Henry VII, who cemented his father's claim that he was uniting the Lancastrian and Yorkist royal houses. Arthur had lots of different strands of royal blood flowing into him, and he was expected to be a unifying king. He had a very elaborate christening at Winchester, and from that point on he's really trained to be the second Tudor king. He learns from a very early age how to be a lord, how to look after institutions, how to defend the law, how to run his lands and how to manage people. So by the time he died aged 15 and a half, he's really on the cusp of independent rule.

How did Arthur die, and could his death have been avoided?

Arthur and Catherine of Aragon were married in November 1501 in a spectacular ceremony. It was a very lavish celebration of dynasty and union between the Spanish kingdoms and England. They stayed in London for about a month, and probably travelled back to Ludlow [where Arthur had grown up] in time for Christmas. But right at the start of April near Easter Sunday he died. We think that was because of the 'sweating sickness', which was a disease that came over to England with Henry VII's army in 1485. It had flu-like symptoms of shaking, sweating and convulsions, then a coma and either death or recovery. It was just unlucky that there was a big outbreak in Worcestershire and South Shropshire in the spring of 1502. It was a new-ish disease that they didn't know how to deal with.

If they'd not travelled for Christmas but stayed until March, they might have avoided the outbreak and both lived as man and wife for much longer.

Would Arthur and Catherine of Aragon have had children?

I don't see any reason why they wouldn't have had children. Obviously we assume that they tried to have children once Arthur and Catherine were married, [although] Catherine said she was still a virgin when Arthur died. I find it a bit unusual that after six months there's no evidence they slept together. Certainly Catherine would say it didn't happen because it was in her interests to marry Henry VIII. So would time have given them an heir? Possibly. I'm sure they would have been on the case to make sure there was an heir fairly soon. But of course Henry VII would have still been aligned with Elizabeth of York, [Prince] Henry might have been married to one of Maximilian's daughters, so there could have been other routes for a Tudor child to emerge under Henry VII and a bigger, broader family, with lots of secure European alliances through marriage.

What would have happened to Prince Henry if he hadn't assumed Arthur's throne?

The idea that Henry VIII might have been destined for the high church - [becoming] Archbishop of Canterbury - was put forward by Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury, who wrote *The Life And Raigne of King Henry VIII* in the 17th century, but the claim was backed by no evidence; although he did use documents and state papers, some of which might now be lost. Henry did know much about the church and had a very solid interest in theology - as he showed in the late 1520s when the proceedings for annulment of his marriage gathered speed. As a royal cleric he would have been determined to show his pre-eminence and power. Since in reality he was not afraid to destroy the structures of ecclesiastical life when dissolving the monasteries, had he joined the high ranks of the church, I can see him launching a

campaign to become Pope at some point in his life. He would have had a chance to use his charm and influence to win the election.

Would King Arthur have continued his father's close alliance with Spain?

Yes, I think he might have seen that as a natural connection. Arthur is very much aware of how this diplomatic picture is being set up through marriages. And in his letters to Catherine, once he's old enough to write, there's also a sense of affection. He is very taken with Catherine, so Arthur would have done everything to maintain that connection, especially if they'd had children pretty early on. The Spanish connection was quite firm, and he was happy to go along with that in the future.



RIGHT
Arthur Tudor depicted in a church stained glass window in Worcestershire, near where he died

What if...
ARTHUR TUDOR LIVED?



What if... ARTHUR TUDOR LIVED?

How would this alliance have affected the conquest of the New World?

Well there's an agreement with Spain and Portugal in the early 1490s, which kind of splits the Americas. I think if John Cabot hadn't disappeared in 1498 on his second voyage, and if he had come back to England with much more solid evidence, I think we could have seen the English pouring into the northern part of America. Had England established a kind of northern outpost coming down from Newfoundland, I could have seen a way of England, with that Spanish connection through King Arthur, possibly coming to some sort of deal much earlier in the 16th century about the demarcation of colonies. Obviously we had to wait until the 1580s in the end for any kind of English colony to establish itself even temporarily, which was in Virginia and the Carolinas. So that would probably have happened much earlier.

Would Arthur have supported the English Reformation?

I'm sure there would have been pockets of Protestantism emerging, but I imagine Arthur would have been fairly conservative. It would have been harder to see it emerging in the way it did, simply because Henry VIII's break with Rome really changed the whole picture in terms of religion. I imagine Prince Arthur would have been much more conservative in his views and therefore, if he was King Arthur, that process would have been much slower, and I'm sure he wouldn't have had a need for the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the same form. I think it would have been

less likely, certainly less likely in the form it did take, and probably would have been a much slower process, and probably more resisted. But I think the door would have been open to those ideas coming in at a lower level.

Do you think Arthur would have persecuted Protestants, as Henry VII had English Jews?

I think it's fair to say that Arthur would have followed his father's lead in theology and church matters. Jews would have remained banished from residing in England, unless as converts and then denizens. There is very little evidence for established Jewish communities outside of very small London-based Spanish and Portuguese merchant and medical groups in the later Tudor period.

Arthur would have defended the Catholic faith in England, persecuting heretics and lollards as previous kings had done. Henry VIII, after all, received the title of Defender of the Faith for his attack on Luther's writings in 1521, and I see no reason why King Arthur would not have been as resolute in defending traditional piety and church practice.

Do you think that as king, Arthur would have been as extravagant with spending his money as his brother Henry VIII was?

We certainly know that Henry spent a million pounds in 1509 to 1510, and half a million pounds in the six months just before the war with France in 1513. It was in the bank almost waiting for him when



ABOVE

If Arthur had survived, England and Spain may have been allies rather than warring enemies throughout the 16th century

LEFT

Arthur may have remained married to Catherine of Aragon

RIGHT

Arthur was named after the mythical king, who Henry VII claimed descent from



How would it be different?

Real timeline

First begotten son

The first son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York is born in Winchester. Arthur is raised to become a king, including how to govern, military tactics and several languages. **19 September 1486**

A royal wedding

While both just 15 years old, Prince Arthur marries Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Spanish power couple Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, in a lavish ceremony at Old St Paul's Cathedral in London. **14 November 1501**

Henry VII's decision

Fearful of claimants to his throne, Henry VII was eager that the newlyweds should leave London to take up residency at Ludlow Castle, where they could focus on starting a family. **November 1501**

Alternate timeline

The future king is dead

Having travelled to Worcestershire and later Ludlow Castle in Shropshire around Christmas time 1502, Arthur succumbed to an outbreak of sweating sickness, and died. **2 April 1502**

The Queen and King follow suit

In an attempt to give birth to another heir, Henry VII's wife Elizabeth of York dies of a postpartum infection on her 37th birthday. Henry VII dies a widower on 21 April 1509. **24 February 1503**

Lucky escape

News of a plague spreading through Worcestershire arrives before Arthur and Catherine set off for Ludlow, so the newlyweds spend the winter in London and Arthur survives. **December 1501**

Secured succession

The newlyweds, safely away from the outbreak, consummate their marriage and give birth to a son. Henry VII, no longer fearful of the future of his throne, lessens his security measures. **January 1502**





he became king. But that money was really only created because Henry VII was using finance as a way of securing his position as king. It was money that was brought out of nobles' pockets. Had Arthur lived, Henry VII probably wouldn't have gone through that process in the first place.

Ultimately, what would the future of England have been like under King Arthur?

Had Henry VII lived longer and had Arthur taken the throne in stable conditions as the husband of Catherine of Aragon and sure ally of Aragon and Castile in the later 1510s, then I think England would have become even more entangled in the politics and alliances connected to the Italian wars - with the Pope and papal states key movers.

Even if this was through financial loans and proxy support, Arthur's reign would have been very much part of the orthodox pattern of religion and would probably have reacted as much of Europe did to the gradual rise of Lutheranism, Calvinism and protestant beliefs. England would still have felt the growth of these movements, but without the upheaval of the Dissolution and the establishment of the Church of England it would have been far harder for reformers to get the state to change religion and religious practice.

A different kind of clash would have come as some influential figures adopted Protestant beliefs, but it would have been a more drawn out process since the traditional fabric of religion in society would not necessarily have been torn apart as it was in the 1530s and 1540s.



ABOVE
Arthur would have continued the work of his father, Henry VII

RIGHT
Portrait of Prince Arthur, circa 1500



© Alamy

● An unlikely king arises

Following the death of his father, and as the only heir, Prince Henry is coronated as King Henry VIII. Two weeks prior, he had wedded his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon. **24 June 1509**



● A child is finally born

After four failed pregnancies, Catherine gave birth to a surviving infant - but the girl, the future Mary I, does not solidify Henry VIII's succession and he grows more desperate. **18 February 1516**



● When not in Rome

Henry, infatuated with a young Anne Boleyn, pushes for divorce from Catherine. After marrying Anne in 1533, he is appointed head of the Church of England, and separates from Rome by passing the Act of Supremacy. **November 1534**



● A son is born

After Anne Boleyn fails to produce a male heir, Henry has her executed on trumped charges. While he goes on to marry eight times, Henry's third wife finally gives him a son, the future Edward VI. **12 October 1537**



● The end to a tumultuous reign

King Henry VIII dies at the age of 55, in part due to his obesity and poor health. He was interred in St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, and survived by his last wife, Catherine Parr. **28 January 1547**



● A strong Spanish and English alliance

With Arthur and Catherine's marriage secured, England enjoys a long and prosperous alliance with Spain, working together against common enemies in Europe. **1504**

● England in the New World

Following the surprising return of the explorer John Cabot, England decides to set up a colony in North America, under agreement with both Spain and Portugal. **1510**

● A name fit for a king

Prince Arthur becomes King Arthur I after the death of his father, promising to continue his father's reign, if with a more measured approach. **1520**

● Living the high life

Now free of the burdens of being king, Prince Henry is able to enjoy sports and games with few responsibilities. In time, he is made the Archbishop of Canterbury. **1522**



● England remains a Catholic country

With no need to split from papal authority, England remains a Catholic country aligned with Rome long into the future. **1530**

● A Tudor dynasty

Prince Arthur dies peacefully in old age, and is buried alongside his only wife Catherine. He leaves behind a strong lineage of heirs, which keep the Tudor name in power for the foreseeable future. **1540**

What if...

ANNE BOLEYN AND HENRY VIII HAD A SON?

If Anne Boleyn had given Henry VIII a male heir, the crowns of England and Scotland might never have been united

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Elizabeth Norton

Dr Norton is a historian of the queens of England and the Tudor period. She has authored many academic studies and books, including *Women Who Ruled the World: 5000 Years of Female Monarchy*.

Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived. It's one of the most widely known mnemonics in British education. If Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife, had given birth to a son, this turbulent and famous era of British history might have been completely different. A daughter and a miscarried son led to Anne's execution in 1536, but also to the famous reign of Elizabeth I, the end of the Tudor line, and the union of the crowns of England and Scotland. If Anne had given England a male heir, British history could have looked very different.

Why was it important for Anne to have a son?

The Tudor dynasty was not a fertile one. Henry VIII had no surviving brothers, while his father, Henry VII, was an only child. As a result, Henry VIII really needed to produce a male heir to ensure that the succession was settled. England had never had a crowned reigning queen before, with the only example of a female claimant - that of Empress Matilda in the 12th century - not a positive one. As far as Henry VIII was concerned, Anne needed to produce a son to stave off civil war.

How would a son have affected those close to the royal couple, such as Thomas Cromwell and the Boleyn family?

The Boleyns would have been thrilled if Anne had produced a son. She was close to her parents, particularly her mother, Elizabeth, as well as her brother, George. All would have been

pleased on a personal level, but their overwhelming reaction would have been relief since Anne's position would have become insurmountable.

Thomas Cromwell, on the other hand, would undoubtedly have been less than pleased. Although he was, to a great extent, politically aligned with the Boleyns, he and Anne did not get on, with some evidence to suggest that his career was held back during her time as queen. It was Cromwell who led the plot to replace Anne with Jane Seymour, something that could never have occurred had Anne given birth to a son.

How much of the turbulence of Henry's reign would have been avoided by Anne having a son?

Well, he almost certainly wouldn't have

gone on to have another four wives! Otherwise, much would likely have remained the same. The Dissolution of the Monasteries began towards the end of Anne's time as queen and this would still have sparked the Pilgrimage of Grace, which was a great rebellion against Henry, in October 1536.

Anne's marriage was always unpopular with the people at large, so her continued marriage might have caused further political troubles for Henry. Nonetheless, most people would have been happy to have a male heir and her reputation might have improved.

Anne would likely (although not certainly) have pushed the king to go further with his religious reforms, although as Catherine Parr found in 1546, Henry was no friend to Protestants



RIGHT
A 19th-century painting of Henry VIII meeting Anne Boleyn

Main image sources: © Getty Images

What if...
ANNE BOLEYN AND HENRY VIII HAD A SON?



THE PAST

29 JANUARY 1536

MISCARRIAGE

When Henry and Anne were publicly married in 1533 (they were likely privately married in late 1532, before his first marriage was technically annulled), Anne was already visibly pregnant with Elizabeth. After one miscarriage in 1534, she miscarried again in 1536. It was the death of this male child that was probably the final straw for Anne, as Henry lost patience with her.



2 MAY 1536

ACCUSATIONS

By May 1536 Anne, now fallen out of Henry's favour, also fell out with one of her old allies, Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell had the opportunity to make a decisive move that would rid him of the queen and improve his standing with the king. A musician called Mark Smeaton confessed, under torture, to having an affair with Anne, while also naming three other men. On top of this, her brother was also accused of committing adultery, treason and incest with her. On these grounds, Anne was arrested and the marriage annulled.



19 MAY 1536

DEATH

On 19 May, after these accusations had sealed her fate, Anne was taken to Tower Green for her execution. She was to be beheaded, which was actually something of a mercy on Henry's part, being the less torturous method than the alternative of being burned, and went peacefully, saying, "I am come hither to die, for according to the law and by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it". Henry married Jane Seymour just 11 days later.



ABOVE
An illustration of Anne's marriage procession in 1533

even if he did break the English church away from Rome.

If Anne had given birth to a living male heir in 1536, how would it have affected Henry's relationship with Jane Seymour? Would he have stayed married to Anne?

I don't think we would remember Jane Seymour at all if Anne had given birth to a son in 1536. Anne's failure to bear a son very much created an opening for Jane which she exploited. Without a son, Anne was vulnerable. As soon as her son was born, her position would have been entirely fixed.

Divorce wasn't really possible in the 16th century, so to end a marriage it was necessary to obtain an annulment. This meant that the marriage had never been valid, something which had implications for the legitimacy of the couple's children. Henry could never risk calling

BELOW
Hever Castle was the childhood home of Anne Boleyn



the legitimacy of his son into question and so would have stayed married to Anne. Jane Seymour would most likely have been a royal mistress.

Anne is sometimes framed as a political schemer. What moves might she have made if she'd given birth to a son?

Anne's position would have been supreme if she had given birth to a son and I think it is likely that she might have moved against some of her enemies, most notably Thomas Cromwell. She might also have secured the demotion of her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, whom she disliked and we could expect to see him retreat from court somewhat.

It is possible that her relationship with Princess Mary might have improved, since no one would seriously consider Mary as heir in preference to a brother. Anne had already attempted to befriend her and would probably have continued to do so. Mary did eventually sign a document agreeing that her parents' marriage had been invalid and she might have been prepared to do this, with time, if Anne remained queen.

Anne would very likely have promoted the religious reform movement and we would probably remember her, rather than Catherine Parr, as England's first Protestant queen. She would have continued to patronise Thomas Cranmer and change might have occurred more quickly in England under her

queenship, although she would have had to be careful to ensure that she did not overstep as far as Henry was concerned.

How would people in England and abroad have reacted to the news of a male heir?

Most people in England would have been ecstatic. When sons were born into the royal family, bonfires were lit in the street and free wine was handed out, giving the occasion a party atmosphere. I think most people would also have been relieved, since it would mean that the succession was finally settled. Even those who opposed Anne Boleyn would probably come to terms with the eventual succession of her son, just as they did with Elizabeth.

Abroad, the position would be more tricky. The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, did not recognise Anne as queen (although his ambassador was manoeuvred into bowing to her at Easter 1536 for the first time). The death of his aunt, Catherine of Aragon, in January 1536 would, however, have smoothed relations somewhat. Most likely Catherine's family would have come to terms with the birth of Anne's son over time, just as they did with Elizabeth's eventual succession.

How would the birth of a son have changed Elizabeth's life?

As a girl, Elizabeth would be pushed down the succession by a baby brother (as indeed happened in 1537 with the birth of her half-brother). On the positive side, if Anne had given birth to a son then Elizabeth's legitimacy would not have been challenged and she would likely have had a happier and more conventional childhood. Elizabeth, as the full sister of the king, could likely expect an arranged foreign marriage, just as her father's sisters had. Perhaps she would have married Philip II of Spain instead of her half-sister Mary, or maybe

BELOW LEFT
Queen Elizabeth I was Anne Boleyn's only surviving child

BELOW RIGHT
William Shakespeare was a part of the Elizabethan Golden Age

one of the Habsburg archdukes or the king of Sweden. It would all depend on the alliance that her brother was hoping to build.

If Anne had a son, would England have still experienced a Golden Age as it did under Elizabeth I?

Yes and no. A lot of the glories of Elizabeth's reign, such as the growth of the theatre and the works of William Shakespeare, happened without too much direct input from her. The same can probably be said for exploration, with the first attempt to found an English colony in the North America at Roanoke Island happening during her reign.

A lot would depend on her brother's personality. Edward VI was fairly puritanical in his religious faith with a much stricter settlement of religion during his reign, something that would have been a major change if Elizabeth's full brother had reigned instead.

While reigning queens were rare, they tend to draw attention and remain highly visible in the historical record. As a result, our attention is drawn to Queen Elizabeth I in a way that it would not be to, say, King Henry IX. Henry IX would not have owned 2,000 dresses or have appeared resplendent as Gloriana in portraiture from the period. Many of the difficulties that Elizabeth I faced as a female ruler arguably made her stronger, or she used them to her advantage. There might well have been something of a golden age, but not to the same extent as Elizabeth I.

How might the monarchy look today if Anne had given Henry a son?

Anne's marriage triggered the English Reformation, so we can assume that England would still have become a Protestant country under the reign of her son. The most interesting change would be in relation to Scotland. If Anne's son married and produced heirs then there would be no union of the crowns in 1603 as there was at the accession of James VI to the English throne. However, one interesting point is that in 1560 Mary, Queen of Scots was widowed. She returned home to Scotland the following year looking to make an advantageous second marriage. If Anne's son was still unmarried, he would undoubtedly have been the frontrunner in the race for Mary's hand. Perhaps we would have seen the union of England and Scotland 40 years before it actually occurred, with the marriage of Scotland's queen to England's king.

THE POSSIBILITY

29 JANUARY 1536

BIRTH OF A SON

If the miscarriage Anne suffered in 1536 had carried to full term, she would have given Henry VIII the legitimate male heir he desperately wanted. With this, the burgeoning romance that Henry had with Jane Seymour may have come to nothing more than another of Henry's extramarital dalliances.



2 MAY 1536

POLITICAL MANOEUVRING

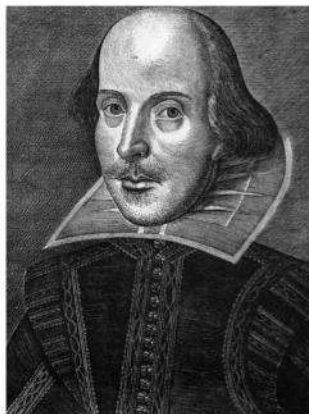
Having had a son, Anne would have become untouchable to those who wanted her gone. With the power in Anne's hands, she might have made moves to rid herself of Cromwell, bringing his rise to prominence to an early end and reducing his influence to nothing. Far from the star of *Wolf Hall*, Cromwell may have been little more than a footnote in history.



19 MAY 1536

LIFE AND POWER

With a young, healthy son by her side, Anne would have been the unquestioned Queen of England by the end of May 1536. She might have settled comfortably into the role and begun to exercise her power and influence by patronising Thomas Cranmer and promoting Protestantism across the kingdom. There may have been a sense of relief around the nation as political stability had taken over from the uncertainty of the royal family.



What if...

THOMAS CROMWELL WASN'T EXECUTED?

Henry VIII's insidious advisor remains in his post and better placed than many to whisper into the ear of the impressionable young Edward VI

INTERVIEW WITH



Tracy Borman

Tracy Borman is an author and historian, specialising in the Tudor period. Her books include the *Sunday Times* bestseller, *Thomas Cromwell: The Untold Story of Henry VIII's Most Faithful Servant*, *The Private Lives of the Tudors*. Tracy is also a broadcaster and has presented a number of history series, including *Private Lives*.

By the time of his execution on the orders of King Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell had clawed and fought his way from being a humble commoner to be known as one of the most influential and powerful men in all of England.

His fall from grace was by no means unusual; as victims of Henry's sometimes irrational and increasingly volatile behaviour, many had suffered the very same fate.

But what if Cromwell's career had not ended in this way? What if Henry had not been swayed by Cromwell's enemies and had continued to have him as his most loyal and trusted servant?

Such was the extent of the web of Cromwell's influence that, had he been given the opportunity to continue, the picture of history for decades – perhaps even centuries – could have been so

drastically changed that it is difficult to imagine it could be attributed to the existence of just one man.

What would have happened to Cromwell's rivals?

We can be sure that Cromwell would have had his revenge upon his two principal rivals, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk and Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, both of whom were responsible for persuading Henry to have Cromwell charged with treason. Each of these men had their own reasons to want Cromwell out of the way. As head of a principle family Norfolk relished power, influence and the king's favour. Cromwell had got in the way of that and for him to be a

commoner enraged Norfolk even more. Howard was to be stripped of his title and condemned to death by King Henry, only to be saved by the king's own death. But with his political guile and the ear of the king, Cromwell could well have brought about Norfolk's demise even sooner, playing on Norfolk's ambition and the unfortunate family connection to Anne Boleyn, a person and a matter that Henry was desperate to forget.

In Gardiner, Cromwell had both a political and religious rival. Each had served the former Cardinal Wolsey and had clashed over their political ambitions in the king's court.

Gardiner had, however, been kept away from the inner circle of influence with a



RIGHT

Elizabeth may never have reached the throne, becoming a far less significant figure in history

FAR RIGHT

A Protestant allegory showing Henry VIII passing the torch to Edward VI. The process of the English Reformation may have been hastened by Cromwell



What if...
THOMAS CROMWELL WASN'T EXECUTED?

Thomas Cromwell by
Hans Holbein, painted
on oak panel between
1532 and 1533



What if... THOMAS CROMWELL WASN'T EXECUTED?

number of overseas diplomatic postings and missions, something which Cromwell could arrange to continue and neutralise him as a threat. They also differed greatly over the form and speed of religious changes under Henry and with Gardiner out of the way Cromwell could have worked more quickly towards his goal of a more reformist England.

The Seymour brothers (Edward in particular) were also hostile towards Cromwell and had supported the plot against him, but they were pretty much untouchable because their sister Jane had given Henry his precious son. It could be that Cromwell would have been able to reinforce a family connection with the Seymours following the marriage of his son Gregory to Jane's sister. The Seymours

may have come around to the fact that Cromwell was better an ally than an enemy and their own thirst for power, embodied in Edward Seymour as Lord Protector of the young King Edward VI, could have been well supported and manipulated by Cromwell.

How could Cromwell have influenced Henry's future behaviour?

Henry was notoriously difficult to control in the latter years of his reign, as he became increasingly paranoid and changeable. But Cromwell had proved more successful than most of the king's other men in judging his mood and subtly influencing his opinions and decisions. He also realised that actions spoke louder than words, and had always made it his policy to find out the matters

closest to Henry's heart and to make it his business to work on them to his royal master's satisfaction.

This had served him well for the decade before his fall and he would no doubt have continued with the same strategy - perhaps making amends for the Anne of Cleves fiasco by helping to find a suitable sixth bride after Catherine Howard's adultery was discovered in 1541. The endorsement of the King's favour would have left Cromwell in a strong position to serve and support young Edward, Henry's successor.

Would the relationship with the Church have been different?

It is likely that Cromwell would have spurred Henry on to even greater reforms. In his absence Henry had reverted back to a more conservative stance, but - perhaps with the lure of further financial gains - Cromwell might have persuaded the king of the benefits of making the English church fully reformist.

By sidelining Gardiner and others like him Cromwell could have made this

"Cromwell could well have brought about Norfolk's demise even sooner, playing on Norfolk's ambition"

BELOW

Lady Jane Grey facing the executioner's axe. With Cromwell pulling the strings, this might well have been the fate faced by Mary I instead





ABOVE
Thomas Howard, third Duke of Norfolk, was one of Cromwell's deadliest rivals and may have met his comeuppance had he survived Henry VIII's wrath

possible and would certainly have been the case under the Protestant Edward VI where Cromwell's reforms could have been consolidated and had a greater impact, countering any threat of a return to Rome by undermining Roman Catholic support and isolating Princess Mary from her followers and power base.

What impact could Cromwell have had in Parliament?

In the years before his death, Cromwell had dominated Parliament, pushing through sweeping legislation to effect a thoroughgoing reformation in both religious and political life.

It was his favoured arena and his training as a lawyer gave him the skills to dominate debates there.

He would have continued to do so, and it's interesting to speculate that he might have made Parliament a more powerful force, perhaps even one that challenged royal authority - as his

successor (and relative) Oliver would do in the following century.

Could Cromwell have had any influence on the succession?

If he had lived until the close of Edward VI's reign then we can be sure that he would have joined with John Dudley, Earl of Northumberland in ensuring Lady Jane Grey's succession. The idea of having the stoutly Roman Catholic Princess Mary on the throne would have been anathema to Cromwell.

In his will the young king had made his wishes for Jane Grey and her male heirs to succeed him very clear, and with Cromwell throwing his support behind Jane's claim, Mary's supporters may not have been so confident in fighting for the crown. Cromwell would have planned his moves with care and then used all his diplomatic manoeuvrings and political ruthlessness within the Privy Council to persuade and prevent them finding in Mary's favour.

What of Scotland?

An England under Queen Jane I and her cabal of powerful Protestant backers like Thomas Cromwell would have most likely increased the momentum of the Scottish Reformation. Even under Henry VIII, English literature and propaganda had flowed north, and under Jane I this may have continued apace with support being lent to influential radicals like John Knox. Cromwell was nothing if not politically pragmatic, and this could be as much about pulling Scotland into England's embrace as it was about ensuring Protestant supremacy.

Emboldened by closer ties with their co-religionists in the south, Scottish protestants may have been less indulgent of the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots and her French airs and graces. Too willful to convert and unable to win over the potent Protestant block in court, Mary may have been ousted far sooner and the crown passed to James Hamilton, Second Earl of Arran, next in line if Mary died without heir.



'Covenanters in a Glen'
by Alexander Carse

Both the princesses were still officially illegitimate and Cromwell would have used his skills as a lawyer to push the point in Jane's favour. As a Roman Catholic, Princess Mary may very well have been imprisoned rather than exiled to only then raise support for her cause. Princess Elizabeth may have befallen a similar fate at first, although as a Protestant would have endured slightly more leniency, to be perhaps then married off to one of the foremost Protestant families in Europe and helping to cement England in a Protestant alliance.

With Jane Grey on the throne a whole new dynastic line would have opened up, changing the thread of history as we know it. She was in her late teens when offered the crown and there is every reason to think she would have produced at least one male heir.

And there is every reason to think that had he survived, Cromwell would have been for her, as he had been for Henry, a true and loyal servant.

What if...

KATHERINE PARR NEVER MARRIED HENRY VIII?

Author, intellectual and formidable queen regent, Parr's impact as Henry VIII's wife resonates to this day

Image source: Don Matzat

INTERVIEW WITH



Don Matzat

Dr Donald Matzat has been a pastor in the Lutheran Church for over 50 years. In 2017, he adapted Katherine Parr's *The Lamentation Of A Sinner*. This is probably the first time this treatise has been made available as a standalone volume since 1562. It remains the only available edition. He continues to serve as a part-time pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wentzville, Missouri.

Who was Katherine Parr?

Katherine Parr was the sixth and final wife of the infamous King Henry VIII. She was born in 1512, the daughter of Sir Thomas Parr and Maude Green. Sir Thomas was a good friend of King Henry and profited from that friendship. Katherine's mother Maude was one of the attendants in the service of Catherine of Aragon, Henry's first wife. Katherine was named after Catherine of Aragon, who was also her godmother. So ironically, Henry's last wife was named after his first wife. Katherine received a good education, she was proficient in French and Italian and perhaps even knew some Greek and Latin. In addition, she acquired other skills such as a knowledge of etiquette and good manners, and an easy conversational style. She had the ability to sing and play music. Of all the wives of Henry VIII, Katherine was the most intellectual.

Katherine was married twice before. In 1529, she married Sir Edward Borough, who died in 1533. In 1534, she married John Neville, Third Baron Latimer, who was twice Katherine's age. Katherine now gained the title Lady Latimer. Upon the death of Lord Latimer in 1543, Katherine, now a woman of means, returned to court for the express purpose of being close to her real love interest, Sir Thomas Seymour.

How did she become Henry's wife?

After mourning the death of his teenage bride Catherine Howard, Henry was on the prowl for wife number six and Katherine Parr caught his eye at court. Henry eliminated his competitor

Seymour by making him the ambassador to Holland. After the death of Lord Latimer, in May of 1543, Henry proposed to Katherine declaring, "Lady Latimer, I wish you to be my wife." He did not expect an immediate response and gave Katherine time to think about it.

Why did she consent to marry Henry?

Contrary to the popular yet absurd notion that God had somehow commanded Katherine to marry Henry, a letter written to her brother George four months after the marriage tells the story. She wanted the 'comforts' associated with being the queen of England and the benefits her family

"Parr maintained peace and stability while the king was in France"

would receive. So, Katherine had to balance the 'perks' of being the queen of England with the prospects of crawling under the royal sheets with the revolting personage of King Henry! Her exceptionally opulent and extravagant lifestyle during the first few years of their marriage confirms her intentions.

What was her brief period of rule like while Henry was away in France?

In July of 1544, Henry, in league with Emperor Charles V, went to war against France and left his wife of only one year in charge of the realm as queen

regent. Thirty years before, when Henry staged an earlier war with France, his first wife Catherine of Aragon was also named queen regent. These two queens were the only two consorts in English history to be afforded this trust and honour. While she had an austere group of advisors, she was not merely a figurehead. Her advisors submitted themselves to her regency and assisted her in that role. Undoubtedly, together with the king, they trusted her judgment.

Katherine ruled well and made important decisions. She dealt with the issues of the status of French citizens living in England, the price of armour and the arrest and trial of deserters. She maintained peace and stability while the king was in France and aided the war effort with supplies of money and material. She was also responsible for the welfare of young Edward, the heir to the throne, a vital consideration should the king die in battle. Correspondence during this time indicates that Katherine and Henry had developed a warm, loving relationship.

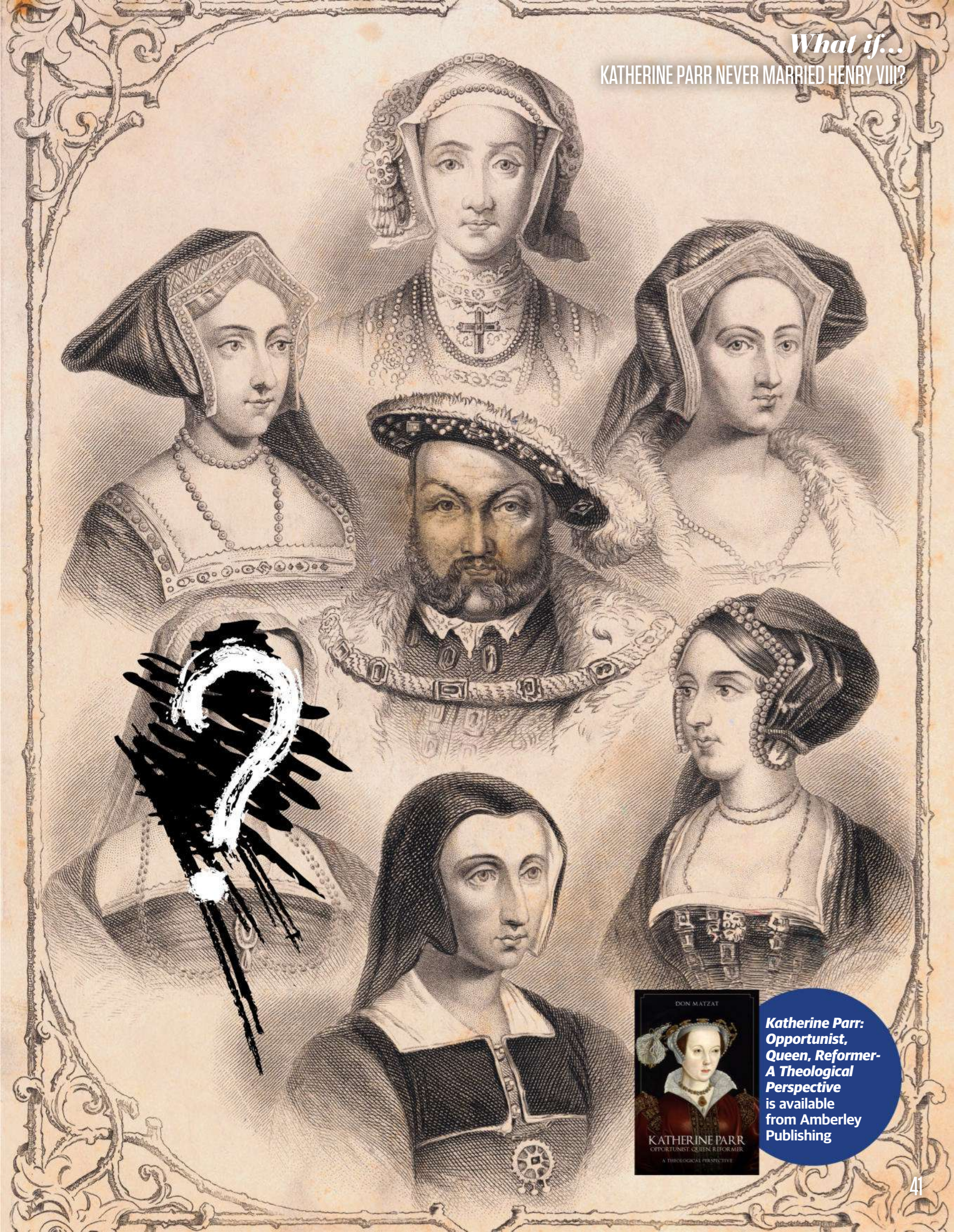
Was there a time when Katherine fell out of favour with the king?

Both Henry and Katherine desired to see the church reformed, but not according to the tenets of the Protestant Reformation but according to the reform touted by the prince of the humanists, Desiderius Erasmus. Many historians attribute the primary impetus of the English Reformation to Erasmus, rather than to Luther or Calvin. The Erasmian reform entailed ridding the church

Main image sources: © Getty Images

What if...

KATHERINE PARR NEVER MARRIED HENRY VIII?



**Katherine Parr:
Opportunist,
Queen, Reformer-
A Theological
Perspective**
is available
from Amberley
Publishing

What if... KATHERINE PARR NEVER MARRIED HENRY VIII?

THE PAST

1509

HENRY VIII

Henry VIII was only 17 when he took to the throne in 1509. As a prince he was deemed to be athletic and highly intelligent, enjoying music and writing books. One of Henry's constant obsessions was his desire to continue his dynasty through a male heir and it was this obsession that would colour many of his romantic relationships.

1509-1542

THE FIRST FIVE

Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, initially fell out of favour with the king due to her inability to provide him with a male heir. After 23 years of marriage, Henry ushered in the Reformation in order to marry Anne Boleyn. However, Henry soon became bored with Anne after she too did not give birth to a son, and following claims she plotted to remove a mistress from court, she was beheaded. Henry annulled the marriage two days before the execution, but the exact legal prefix remains a mystery. Jane Seymour was able to provide the king with the heir which he so desired, but died shortly afterwards from complications. Anne of Cleves was a short-lived marriage that lasted only six months before accepting a divorce.

Henry's final wife before Katherine Parr was another Catherine, Catherine Howard. Only 19, rumours of infidelity would lead to her execution.



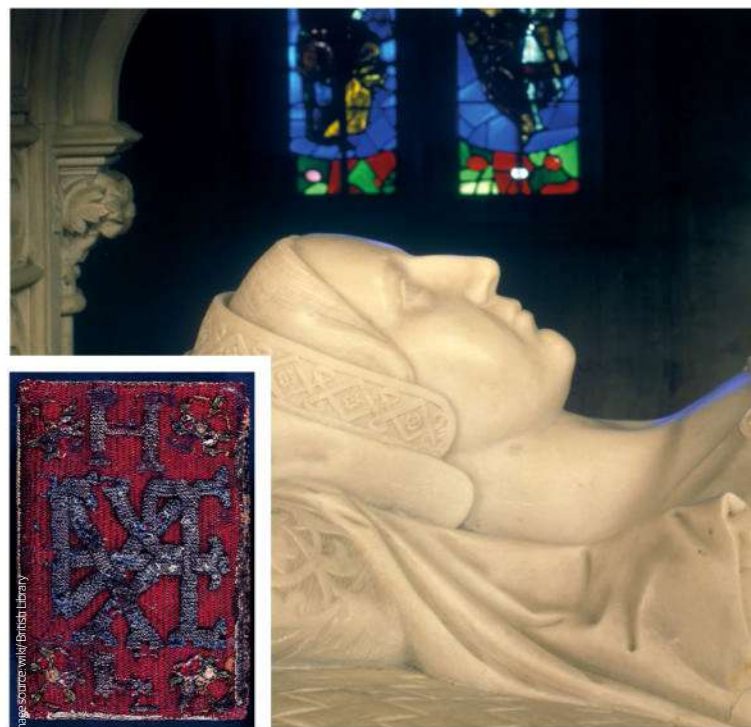
1543-1547

AUTHOR AND RENAISSANCE WOMAN

Parr, as well as authoring *Prayers or Meditations* and *The Lamentation of a Sinner*, had a keen interest in the nascent publishing industry. An interest in advancing book binding and printing shared with her brother William Parr helped lead to numerous developments in this sector. She also took a keen interest in the careers of religious authors such as Edward Whitchurch, helping to promote them using her influence as queen. Her love of painting, and in particular a passion for portraiture, left behind numerous examples and popularised the miniature format.

of meaningless superstitions, dead formalism, indulgences, the corruption of the monasteries and installing a religion where the common people could read and study the Bible and follow the 'Philosophy of Jesus'. This defined the piety of Parr evidenced in her daily Bible studies with her attendants and in her works *Psalms or Prayers*, published anonymously, and *Prayers or Meditations*, the first book published in England by a woman under her own name with the blessing of her husband. Both works reflected traditional Roman Catholic theology. Parr also directed the translation into English of the biblical *Paraphrases of Erasmus*.

Everything changed for her when, probably in early 1546, she embraced Martin Luther's discovery of justification by faith, the *sine qua non* of the Protestant Reformation. Henry vehemently opposed this teaching of Luther since it ascribed salvation to faith in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ alone and gave no place to good works as being meritorious for salvation. It was a heretical teaching and those



ABOVE-INSET
Back cover of
Parr's *Prayers and
Meditations*

BELOW An 1851
portrait of Parr

who embraced it could be burned at the stake. Yet, Parr was bold to discuss her new-found faith with her husband. Bishop Stephen Gardiner, who had previously praised Henry's choice of Parr as his new wife, now brought charges of heresy against her and convinced Henry to sign an arrest warrant. Learning of this warrant for her arrest, Parr pleaded her case before her husband and the warrant was never served, and her life was spared.

Did Katherine Parr impact the Protestant Reformation?

In November of 1547, nine months after the death of Henry, she published her conversion narrative, *The Lamentation of a Sinner*. It was an extremely powerful expression of human sin and divine grace, yet the impact of this treatise was minimal. It was not deemed proper for a queen to so 'debase' herself as Parr did. In addition to rejecting the Papal 'riff-raff' of the traditionalists, she also lampooned the popular Erasmian piety of the day. Under the reign of Roman Catholic Queen Mary, the treatise was banished. After Elizabeth became queen in 1558, the treatise was republished for the last time in 1562 and after that lapsed into obscurity. Alternatively, Parr's Erasmian *Prayers or Meditations* went through a total of 13 printings. There is no evidence that later reform movements such as the Puritans, the Wesleys or William Wilberforce were





LEFT Parr's tomb in Sudeley Castle Chapel, Gloucestershire

BELOW
An illustration of Henry VIII and Parr

marry and have children of his own. But as fate would have it, Edward died at the age of 15, and after the debacle with Lady Jane Grey, Mary became queen. If Mary and Elizabeth weren't in the line of succession, the death of Edward would have marked the end of the Tudor dynasty, potentially leading to the commencement of a civil war and eliminating the great Elizabethan era in English history.

What if the *The Lamentation of a Sinner* had not been written?

This question can only be answered, not from the perspective of past history, but from the perspective of present reality. I self-published this little treatise in 2017 and have been amazed by the interest. Lives have been affected by the words of Parr. A wider circulation of this treatise in my forthcoming book might have even a greater impact. So the answer to the 'What if...' question is yet to be determined.



familiar with *The Lamentation of a Sinner*. Probably few clerics today within the Church of England have read the personal conversion narrative of one of their former queens. *The Lamentation of a Sinner* has the potential to produce a reformation in the lives of those who read and take to heart the words of Parr.

What is her legacy?

Some consider Parr the greatest queen consort in English history. More has been written about her in the past 25 years than in the previous 400. She reigned as queen regent over a powerful group of men. She was the first woman published in England under her own name. She brought together King Henry's dysfunctional family and influenced Henry to include Mary and Elizabeth in the line of succession. Yet, in my opinion, her greatest legacy remains *The Lamentation of a Sinner*.

What if Henry had not married Katherine Parr?

She influenced Henry to include both daughters Mary and Elizabeth, formerly regarded as illegitimate, in the line of succession. Parliament passed the Third Succession Act in 1543, which was the first time women were officially included in the succession to the British crown. In the minds of both Henry and parliament, the possibility of Mary and Elizabeth ever ascending to the throne was remote since they assumed that Edward, Henry's son and heir, would

THE POSSIBILITY

1545

THE SEVENTH WIFE?

While the evidence is slight and inconclusive, there are rumours that at one point Henry VIII became interested in making Catherine Willoughby his seventh wife. Willoughby was an English noblewoman born in 1519 and an outspoken supporter of the Reformation. However, Willoughby is said to have been just as driven by her staunch Protestant beliefs as Parr and so if this was considered a good enough reason to replace her, Willoughby may seem an odd choice. However Henry and Willoughby were certainly familiar, although Parr appears to have been good friends with her.



1553

EDWARD VI: THE LOST KING

Crowned at age nine, Edward VI ruled only until he was 15 when he died tragically. Given his young age, his reign was dominated by nobles seeking to strengthen their own positions in the court. However, he himself was fiercely Protestant (having been the first king raised as such) and so it was in this period that *The Book of Common Prayer* was introduced. As he lay stricken with tuberculosis, he accepted Lady Jane Grey as his heir. If Edward had not died, it is impossible to say what the changes to the throne could have been.

1543-1547

PATRON OF THE ARTS

As well as being interested in the arts, Parr acted as patron to a number of key figures in the English Renaissance. As queen, she maintained her own companies of players and the playwright Nicholas Udall (author of *Ralph Roister Doister*) contributed works. During her reign, the acquisition of royal lands and manors doubled from what it had been in 1535. To this end, it is intriguing to wonder how the arts may have been impacted had she not been queen.

Image source: wiki/Royal Collection Trust

2x © Getty Images

What if...

THE SPANISH ARMADA HAD BEEN VICTORIOUS?

As the Duke of Parma and his forces make land in England, Elizabeth I faces assassination by one of her own

INTERVIEW WITH



Geoffrey Parker

The award-winning professor of history and an associate of the Merhshon Center at The Ohio State University, has written about the social, political and military history of early modern Europe. His best-known books are *The Military Revolution* and *The Grand Strategy Of Philip II*. His new biography of Philip II, called *Imprudent King*, is available online.

What if the Spanish Armada had been victorious?

Then I don't see why they shouldn't have been able to land at Margate and make it to London marching along the south bank of the Thames and perhaps getting to Kingston where there's a bridge and then turning back, marching into London and taking the capital. It had no walls worth speaking of and [the Duke of] Parma would have had a siege train. I think once they got ashore, the Spanish would have been irresistible.

So if the Spanish had played their hand differently they could have landed on British soil?

Yes. Obviously it's always dangerous to speculate with what ifs. What we need to do is ask ourselves two questions: the first is a minimal re-write... you can change little things. Second, you have to ask yourself in the end, even if all these changes were made, whether the long-term picture would have been different. What you might call a 'second order counter-factual.' The English are defeated, but what happens in the long term?

I think we have some pretty good indications. It was thought the Spanish would land in Essex, where the big army is, and neglect Kent, which is in fact the spot where Parma is going to land. You can't have your troops everywhere and the English make a guess - and it's wrong. In 1592, the Duke of Parma had a similarly difficult operation to understand and that is to get his troops in to France and relieve the town of Rouen, which is about 80 miles [130 kilometres] away. They do it in seven days against a hostile enemy.

I do have a parallel for you: the Germans at D-Day had a very similar calculation to Elizabeth Tudor. That is to say, do you - as Rommel wanted - spread the troops evenly out along the shore? Or do you, as Von Rundstedt, spread a few troops along the shore and have a main reserve?

The Spanish Army of Flanders was on the other side of the Channel - what was the plan to get it to England?

Here's the re-write, you see. The fleet would have come up from Spain, somehow communicate to Parma [the head of the Spanish army] that it's on its way so that Parma's troops are already in their little boats. They know the Dutch [England's ally] will be waiting so there are four very powerful 'galleasses' [battleships]. These had done very well in previous operations - they had 50 guns so were as powerful as Queen Elizabeth's galleon. The idea is that these galleasses, which are very shallow draft, go right in and bring Parma's fleet out. The Dutch can't do anything to stop it because none of their ships are armed in a way that could possibly stop the galleasses doing their job. Once you get them into the middle of the Armada, it sails across and the galleasses do the same thing on the Kent shore, preventing anything from intercepting the landing craft.

The Army of Flanders Philip II had mustered was large, highly trained and had a fearsome reputation. Could this army have prevailed on British soil?

I don't think there's any doubt that, man for man, the Spanish army is superior. The one thing it doesn't have is cavalry. But the English don't have much cavalry either

and however well trained the English are, if they're not superior man-for-man, 28,000 will overwhelm 7,000. The English have no field artillery, no fortifications south of the Thames. Even London's walls are primitive.

30 years before there is a rebellion by someone called Thomas Wyatt against Philip II which starts in Kent. Wyatt and his troops march exactly the route Parma would have taken. They cross the Thames at Kingston and they get right up to the walls of London. The only reason why they stop is that they have no artillery and in the end the rebellion crumbles. But Parma would have had a siege train of about 20 guns - London's walls would have come crashing down.

Philip II's ideal goal was to take Westminster with Elizabeth and the Parliament in it. Was this likely?

I think we're getting to fantasy land. As soon as the Armada lands, the English Catholics would be up and one of them would have murdered her. I don't think they would capture Elizabeth, there would be an assassination. Then you have a Tudor state like a headless chicken.

Could Philip II have mustered support from the natives if his army had landed?

They themselves [the Spaniards] assume nothing. They assume there will be no Catholic uprising or, if there is a Catholic uprising, it will be in the Northwest, not as they would need it to be in the South and the East. Protestantism is a new religion and even Elizabeth goes to mass in 1559 until she's absolutely sure she has peace with France, that her sister's war with

RIGHT

The Spanish Armada could have sailed up the Thames and taken London by force

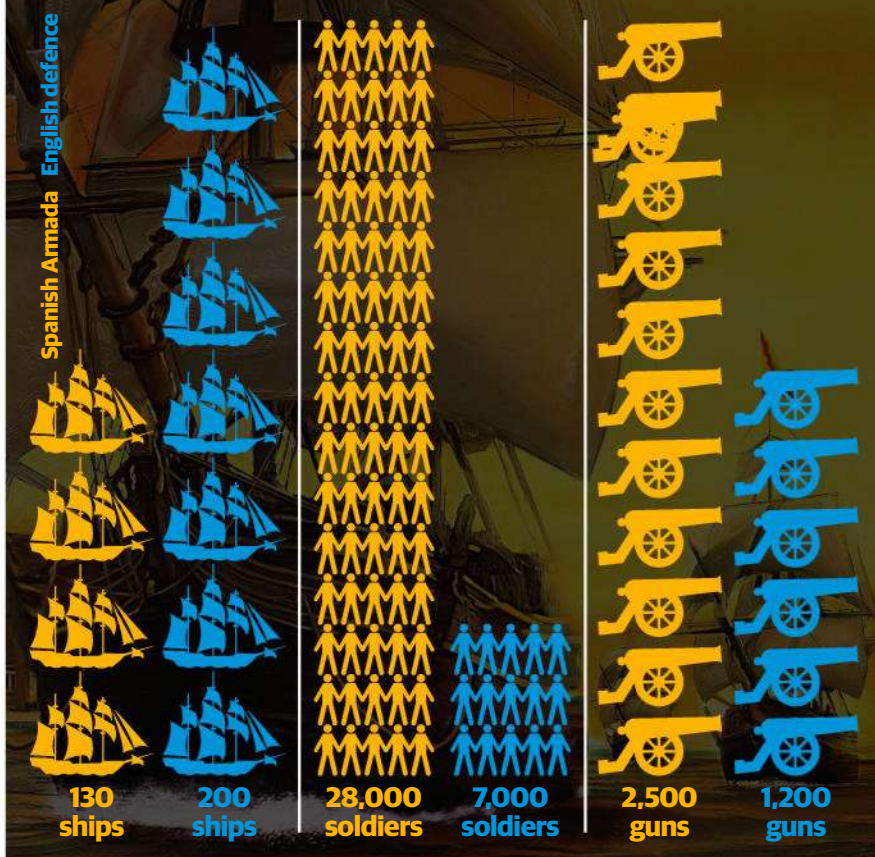
What if...
THE SPANISH ARMADA HAD BEEN VICTORIOUS?

© Amro Ishiy



Attack and defence

How the invading and defending forces matched up



France has been extinguished, so she still pretends to be Catholic.

I think there are people who would like to go back to being Catholic but in terms of a fifth column, in terms of there being a resistance similar to the one in June 1944 in Normandy, I don't think there would have been enough supporters of the invasion to make a difference.

The Duke of Parma had a history of bribing commanders to give up their strongholds. Would many towns in England have done the same?

We do know some of the Anglo-Irish commanders in the Netherlands are bribed. Is that possible in England? Why not? The Anglo-Irish commanders in the Netherlands are all hand picked by Elizabeth. If she chose people who were ideologically unsound as allies, she might well have made the same mistake back in England. We do know the third-in-command, a man called Roger Williams, had spent three years fighting with the Spaniards himself. He was an admirer of the Spaniards and who's to tell whether he might have [defected] if push came to shove, especially if [Elizabeth] is dead. I mean, who are you fighting for? She has no heir - her heir was Mary, Queen of Scots and she had her executed the year before the Armada arrived. So it's hard to see who would have served as the rallying point. Would you really want to fight for James VI of Scotland? I don't think so. But again, Philip and Parma can't count on it - they reckon overwhelming force will do the job.

Elizabeth gave her famous 'Tilbury' speech during the Spanish offensive.



ABOVE
The battle with the Spanish Armada claimed thousands of lives, more from storms than gunfire

"They're terrible men [...] They're going to rape your women, flog you then force you to go back to mass"

How would it be different?





To what extent did a successful defence of Britain galvanise her reign?

The first written account of it is 1623, we don't hear about it until then and then someone says 'I remember, when I was a boy...' How do we know she made that speech and what she said? Cate Blanchett's version is about as likely as the one recorded by Lionel Sharp in 1623!

We're thinking in 20th-century terms. A speech like Churchill's speech in the 1940s: "We will fight them on the beaches [...] we will never surrender." That's broadcast by radio, but Elizabeth doesn't have radio. What you do have is the pulpits. What the pulpits insist is that when these Catholics come, you're going to be very sorry: they're terrible men, they're bringing Jesuits with them, they're bringing whips. They're going

to rape your women, flog you then force you to go back to mass. So I think if you're looking for something that galvanises resistance, it would be the religious card, not the political card.

Would this have had a knock-on effect for the following century?

I don't think the Gunpowder Plot would've happened, because if Elizabeth gives up some concessions to Catholicism, there's no reason for the Catholics to hate James VI.

But we're concentrating on one side. We also have to consider that Philip II is still Philip II. His son Philip III is the child of Philip and his niece. There are already a large number of what we would call incestuous unions [in the family]. So Philip II dies and Philip III is left, a weak

leader. His grandchildren will eventually lose Spain and the dynasty dies out in the 17th century. Even if Spain wins, they're going to have more to lose, they can't defend what they have. Having England as a satellite and regaining the Netherlands - yes, in the short term, a great success. But the Hapsburgs are still Hapsburgs, they will breed and marry with each other. You can't change that and I think in the long term that England, if it had remained independent, if the Tudor dynasty had survived, you still get James VI, so you get reconciliation with Spain. Philip II remains a Hapsburg so his son will not have the skill to keep the empire together. However successful the Armada is, you still get Philip III who will lose whatever gains his father would have made.

● Peace negotiations

The same day the Armada sails, English ambassador Valentine Dale meets with Spanish negotiators in Warburg. Unknown to England, Spain has already chosen war and is using the negotiations to distract Elizabeth.
28 May 1588

● The Armada is sighted

Bad weather works in England's favour for the first and not the last time during the attempted Spanish invasion. It delays the Armada and forces several ships to return to Spain. The rest of the fleet is finally sighted off Cornwall in Southwest England.
19 July 1588

● The tide turns

While the Armada takes harbour on the French coast, the English fleet sends eight fire ships, filled with explosive pitch and gunpowder, into the anchored Spanish fleet, scattering them.
28 July 1588

● Battle of Gravelines

The English fleet returns with a larger naval force and decisively beats the Spanish at Gravelines, northern France.
8 August 1588

● Negotiations abandoned

News of the Armada's approach reaches England and peace negotiations are called off. Elizabeth's fleet is poorly prepared and sorely outgunned. The knowledge that the powerful Army of Flanders is on the other side of the Channel does little to allay England's concerns.
16 July 1588

● First blood

Under direct orders from Philip II, the Spanish fleet forsakes an opportunity to attack part of the English fleet while it is anchored in Plymouth Harbour. Instead, the Armada faces Francis Drake's weaker but faster ships - this results in a stalemate.
21 July 1588

● Back to sea

Another engagement with the English fleet further east of Plymouth, off Portland, is intended to gain the Armada a temporary harbour between the Isle of Wight and England. But a successful defence forces it back out to sea: instead, it heads for Calais.
23 July 1588



● Safe haven

Flush with its first success, the Armada moves into the Solent where it's able to create a safe harbour between the Isle of Wight and England.
23 July 1588

● Escort

Using a small but powerful part of its fleet, the galleasses, the Spanish sail to the Netherlands, where the Army of Flanders awaits in barges. They escort the remaining men across the Channel.
9 August 1588

● Marching in

The Army of Flanders makes landfall in Kent and begins an irresistible march through the English countryside, capturing and pillaging towns as they go. London is only a week away.
10 August 1588

● Elizabeth I assassinated

With news of the Spanish reaching London, the Catholics begin to revolt. Elizabeth's fate is sealed regardless, but whether for the sake of revenge or to make sure she has her comeuppance for Catholic repression, she is assassinated.
11 August 1588

● England beaten

Spain reaches London. With a flotilla of Spanish ships on the Thames, the Duke of Parma's siege train makes short work of London's ancient walls and fortifications. The city falls and the battle is won.
17 August 1588

What if...

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT HAD SUCCEEDED?

In the wake of an act of terror, Protestant vigilantes seek vengeance on their Catholic counterparts

INTERVIEW WITH



Sinead Fitzgibbon

Sinead Fitzgibbon is an Irish author and writer whose published history books include *A Short History of London*, *The Queen and The Gunpowder Plot*, *History in an Hour*. She graduated from university with a degree in economics, working in investment banking in Sydney, Australia for six years before returning to the UK to pursue a career as a writer in 2007. She has a particular interest in art, literature and of course, history.

What if the Gunpowder Plot had been successful?

Had the plot been successful the country's first major colonisation of the New World – the establishment of Jamestown in Virginia in 1607 – may never have happened. Perhaps the French or Spanish would have gotten there first. And had England failed to settle America, would we have then been in a position to colonise the West Indies? Without the profits generated from this colony, Britain might not have had the financial means to expand its horizons in the 19th century. Had the British not settled America in the 17th century, would English be the global language it is today? Probably not. Perhaps we would now live in a world where French is the language of Hollywood and we in Britain would be the ones straining to read the subtitles on the big screen.

How close were Catesby and his co-conspirators to succeeding?

Given the fact that Guy Fawkes, along with his hoard of gunpowder, was discovered by the King's men just a few hours before the fuse was due to be lit, some might say that the plot came very close to succeeding. Further investigation, however, reveals a very different story. Before its dramatic conclusion in the early hours of 5 November 1605, the Gunpowder Plot had been in the planning stages for over 18 months. During this unusually long gestation period, the original five conspirators found it increasingly difficult to deflect suspicion and keep their scheme under wraps. As time went on, necessity forced them to reveal their plans to various friends and family members. On 26 October 1605, an

anonymous letter was sent to one Lord Monteagle warning him not to attend the upcoming opening of Parliament as 'they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them.' Monteagle raised the alarm and the King was informed. The Gunpowder Plot was, thanks to this letter, discovered a full nine days previously.

What would blowing up the Houses of Parliament have done to the political landscape of the day?

Had the powder combusted properly and wiped out prominent members of the royal family and the country's political elite as planned, I doubt the country's political landscape would have greatly changed in the long term. Indeed, the fact that Catesby believed otherwise was naïve in the extreme. Common sense dictates that the powerful Protestant ruling families would surely have hunted down the perpetrators, while Protestant vigilantes, galvanised by the act of terror inflicted on their fellow men in Westminster, would have sought revenge against ordinary Catholic civilians. If anything, a successful Gunpowder Plot would have made life worse for English Catholics, not better.

How do you think British Catholics would have reacted to the untimely death of the Protestant James I?

The majority of 17th-century Catholics would have viewed Catesby's actions in the same way Northern Irish Catholics reacted to the murderous campaigns of the IRA during the Troubles – that is, with abhorrence. Also, it's worth pointing out that James was not uniformly despised by

the Catholic community; many still held out hope that he would be persuaded to lessen the restrictions placed on the Roman religion by his predecessors. After all, his mother was the Catholic martyr, Mary Queen of Scots. Protestants would have been outraged by the regicide, and I believe many would have taken the law into their own hands in an attempt to exact revenge. It's not difficult to envisage an eruption of anti-Catholic riots throughout the country.

How do you think the assassination of James I would have affected Britain's relationship with other countries?

By the 17th century, relations between Protestant Britain and Catholic Spain had been strained for decades. Tensions had begun to escalate during the initial stages of the Reformation when Henry VIII divorced Catherine of Aragon [daughter of Spain's Ferdinand and Isabella], and had peaked with the failed invasion by the Spanish Armada in 1588. Even after 1588, some English Catholics continued to hope that the Spanish would one day succeed in overthrowing the country's Protestant rulers. This intervention never materialised, thanks in large part to the strain imposed on Spain's military resources by the Dutch wars.

It's difficult to say how Spain would have reacted had Catesby's scheme borne fruit. Perhaps it would have tipped the balance in favour of the longed-for Spanish intervention. Maybe Philip III would have sought to capitalise on the plotters' triumph by attempting to install himself or a member of his family on the English throne – after all, his sister, Isabella, had once been touted by some prominent English Catholics as a possible successor to Elizabeth I. But while

RIGHT

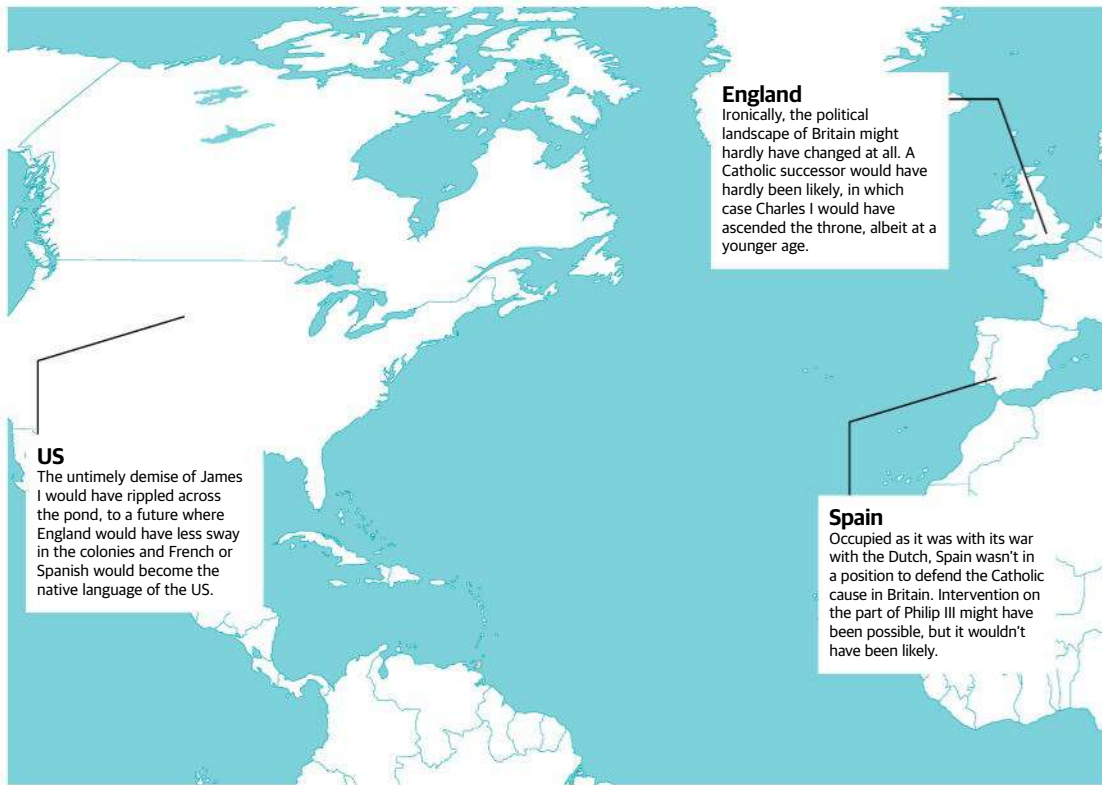
It is possible that the Gunpowder Plot's modern-day ramifications would have included a shift in power in favour of countries like France or Spain

"Would English be the global language it is today? Probably not. Perhaps we would now live in a world where French is the language of Hollywood"

Nous le peuple des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
insure domestic Tranquillity provide for the common defense
and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be
vested in one Body, which shall be called the House of Representatives
Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members
chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the
Qualifications requisite for Electors in the most numerous State
shall be requisite for Representatives

What if... THE GUNPOWDER PLOT HAD SUCCEEDED?



Who would have been the most likely successor to James I if a Catholic monarch was placed on the throne?

In a bid to add legitimacy to his coup, it was Catesby's intention to install James and Anne's nine-year-old daughter, Princess Elizabeth, on the throne as a puppet monarch. Catholic guardians would have been appointed to oversee her re-education in the Roman faith, while a regent would look after affairs of state until she came of age. She would then have been married off to a Catholic prince from one of Europe's royal dynasties, re-establishing a Catholic line of succession. Again, this was a very ill-conceived plan, as it was unlikely Elizabeth would have been as pliable and cooperative as Catesby hoped.

What if James I had died but the Protestants retained control - who would have been crowned then?

James's eldest son, Henry, was due to attend the opening of Parliament along with his parents on the fateful day. Assuming he too had been killed, the next in line to the throne was the youngest son, Charles [Elizabeth would have been precluded from the line of succession thanks to the laws of male primogeniture]. Just as Catesby had planned with Elizabeth, the Protestant establishment would have looked after the boy's, and indeed the country's interests until he reached the age where he could rule in his own right.

What effect would either outcome have had on the lineage of Britain?

In the case of Charles, there would have been no impact on the future line of succession, as he was destined to take the

this scenario was possible, I don't believe it was very probable. By this point in the proceedings, Spain had largely abandoned English Catholics to their fate - indeed, the court of Philip III had previously declined to offer Catesby any assistance in his quest to mount a rebellion.

More broadly, I think the Gunpowder Plot would have had a significant impact on Britain's relations with the wider world, in that Catesby's scheme may well have put paid to the country's early colonial ambitions.

James I was first and foremost a Scottish king - if the assassination had succeeded how would Scotland have reacted?

This is an interesting point to consider. James had been Scotland's monarch for 35 years before succeeding Elizabeth I to the throne in 1603. And given that Scottish Calvinists had gone to great lengths to install James as king in the first place, I doubt they would have taken his assassination lightly. A Scottish invasion of England may well have been the result.

How would it be different?

Real timeline

1533

English Reformation
King Henry VIII takes control of the church in England and, as head of the Church of England, oversees the persecution of the Catholics that refuse to convert to Protestantism.
1533-1540

Elizabeth I crowned queen
There's no relief for the Catholics after Henry VIII's death: his daughter, Elizabeth I, is crowned Queen and imposes severe penalties for anyone caught practising the Catholic faith.
1558



A new king
The queen dies, leaving no heir after reigning through years of religious divide in England. A Protestant, James VI of Scotland, is appointed King of England.
1603



A moderate king
The new king, now James I of England, preferred to exile the religious lawbreakers rather than torture and execute them, but some English Catholics were not to be mollified so easily.
1603-1605

The plotters meet
Robert Catesby and four of his co-conspirators (Thomas Wintour, John Wright, Guy Fawkes and Thomas Percy) make their plans and swear an oath of secrecy in the Duck and Drake Inn, London.
20 May 1604

Undercroft Access

By luck the undercroft beneath the Houses of Parliament are up for lease. The conspirators purchase the lease and begin to move 36 barrels of gunpowder into it over the next few months.
1605



Real timeline

Alternate timeline

“ A Scottish invasion of England may well have been the result ”

throne anyway. In 1612, he became heir apparent when his older brother, Prince Henry, died of suspected typhoid fever [Charles eventually succeeded his father to the throne on the latter's death in 1625].

It is less clear what would have happened to the line of succession had Catesby succeeded in his plan to install Princess Elizabeth as monarch. Would Charles have tried to oust his sister once he came of age? Possibly. Perhaps Elizabeth would have willingly abdicated in favour of her brother, given he was the rightful heir. We shall never know. Elizabeth was, however, to leave her mark on England's royal lineage. When the House of Stuart eventually gave way to the House of Hanover [childlessness having done what a revolution, a beheading, and an abdication had failed to do], it was Elizabeth's grandson, George I, who became the first Hanoverian king. There's a pleasing synchronicity in that, wouldn't you say?

Besides James I, there were some notable historic figures present in the house on the day. What would the knock-on effect of these collateral deaths have had on the history books?

Had the architects of the Gunpowder Plot achieved their aims, the untimely death of Francis Bacon would have been a significant loss to posterity. A polymath who wrote prolifically, his works greatly influenced the development of philosophical, scientific, and legal thinking.

The biggest loser, however, would have been our English language. Both James VI and Bishop Bancroft had a part to play in the compilation of the King James Version of the Bible (KJV), which was destined to form part of the bedrock on which our modern language is built. Although work had started on the KJV in 1604, it wasn't finished until 1611, and you could argue that the project might never have reached completion had these two men perished in November 1605. The other great contributor to our language was, of course, William Shakespeare. It is sobering to consider that, without the patronage of King James [who funded Shakespeare's acting company, The King's Men], some of the greatest works of dramatic tragedy may never have been written. Certainly *Macbeth*, written in 1606 and widely thought to have been inspired by the Gunpowder Plot, may never have seen the light of day - because, as the contemporary writer Sir John Harington famously said, "Treason doth never prosper. What's the reason? Why, if it prosper, none dare call it treason."

What would Britain have been like today, politically and religiously?

When all is said and done, I don't believe Protestantism would have been supplanted had the Houses of Parliament gone up in flames on that November day in 1605. I think the country's Protestant majority would have scuppered Catesby's plans,



ABOVE
Macbeth was thought to have been inspired by the Gunpowder Plot and so may never have seen the light of day had it been a success

and Charles would have succeeded his father to the English and Scottish thrones. Puritanism may have flourished as a reaction to the atrocity, and perhaps Oliver Cromwell would never have had his day in the sun. From a global perspective, the picture may well have been very different. Had the political upheaval resulting from a successful Gunpowder Plot diverted attentions away from colonial expansion, the British Empire may never have got off the ground. It is entirely feasible to suggest that country might never have become a major player on the world stage; instead it may have been destined to play second fiddle in a French or Spanish-speaking world. In short, Great Britain might never have achieved the requisite degree of greatness to justify its lofty name.

● Anonymous tip-off

Lord Monteagle receives an anonymous letter begging him not to go to the opening of Parliament on that fateful day. It proves to be key evidence in revealing the plot to the King.

26 October 1605

● The discovery

With knowledge of the plot, the undercroft is searched the evening before Parliament's opening. Guy Fawkes is discovered hiding there with 36 barrels of gunpowder, ready to light the fuse.

4 November 1605

● Capture and arrest

Over the next few days, the plotters are rounded up, arrested and interrogated. Following trial, they're hung, drawn and quartered - a particularly horrific form of execution reserved for traitors.

8 November 1605

● Declaration of Independence

Britain's hold on the American colonies reaches breaking point as an agreement is signed and a union is formed under one proposed nation: the United States of America.

1776



● Jamestown settled

The Virginia company of London reaches the east coast of America, where a permanent settlement is established - Jamestown - that lasts as the colony's capital for nearly a century.

14 May 1607

● US

After a century of war, the fledgling nation expands and prospers to the world power it is today. Britain's own fortunes wane as its empire diminishes, but English is an international language.

1776-present day

● Anonymous tip-off

Lord Monteagle receives an anonymous letter, but decides to keep its contents to himself. He makes his excuses to avoid Parliament on its fateful opening day.

26 October 1605

● Parliament destroyed

Amid the opening of the Houses of Parliament, there is a huge explosion from the undercroft beneath it. King James I as well as a host of dignitaries are killed.

5 November 1605

● English uprising

Inspired by the plotters, Catholics in many quarters rebel against the Protestants and, despite Charles I taking the throne, Britain is caught up in religious conflict.

1605-1606

● America colonised

The first major colonies of America are established by the French and Spanish. The War for Independence is fought between the colonists and the old-world countries.

1607-1766

● The world stage

Britain never becomes a superpower as it isn't involved in the land-grab of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. French and Spanish are the dominant languages of the modern-day US.

1766-Present day

What if...

CHARLES I HAD WON THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR?

How would England - and the king himself - have recovered in the wake of winning civil war?

INTERVIEW WITH

*Dr
Christopher
Langley*

An historian of the social and religious aspects of Early Modern Britain and Ireland, Dr Christopher Langley is a lecturer at Newman University. In 2015 he published his first book, *Worship, Civil War And Community, 1638-1660*, which focuses on warfare and religion in the Civil War era. In 2020 he released his second book, *Cultures of Care: Domestic Welfare, Discipline and the Church of Scotland*.

*Professor
John Morrill*

John Morrill FBA is Life Fellow of Selwyn College Cambridge and Emeritus Professor of British and Irish History. He is a prolific author of more than 120 books and essays, mainly about the civil wars of the 17th century and about the aftermath of the Reformation.

RIGHT
Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the Parliamentary forces, would have been executed if he hadn't accepted the king's rule

What would have happened if Charles I had won the Civil War?

Christopher Langley: A serious policy of purging national and local councils of those who were clearly disaffected with the royalist cause. Those who had changed sides would be tolerated in exchange for an oath declaring their allegiance - similar to the oaths administered by his son [Charles II] after 1660. Charles would have had to change his religious policy. A broad-based system would continue with bishops at its head, but perhaps local disciplinary structures may have been tweaked to allow local management. Extremists on either side (Presbyterian, Catholic or radical) would have been excluded.

John Morrill: It depends on whether it was won by a knock-out blow, such as complete victory at Edgehill or Turnham Green and a royal occupation of London, or as a result of a 'winning draw' - in which case, a negotiated settlement in which Charles agreed to honour the concessions he had made in 1640 and 1641 but not the new demands of 1642 and later.

Which battles would Charles have had to win to regain control in the war?

Langley: This is a difficult question as much depended upon political machinations after battles. I am inclined to mention that a decisive victory at Edgehill may have allowed for a more dramatic march toward the capital - the loss of any real royalist presence in the southeast severely hindered the war effort. A real royalist victory at the first Battle of Edgehill may have inclined some in Parliament to soften their stance and provide Charles with an important bargaining chip.

Alternatively, Marston Moor in 1644 was critical as it had serious consequences for any royalist desire to connect supporters in Scotland, Ireland and the north of England.

What would have happened to Oliver Cromwell, the Roundhead Army and the Parliamentary supporters?

Langley: With the possibility of routing the New Model Army [the force raised by the Parliamentarians], the royalist negotiating position would have been much stronger. While Charles may have wanted the New Model disbanding, he would have had to deal with the arrears in pay accrued since its formation. If Charles would have carried the day early on in the conflict, Cromwell may have been imprisoned, but his position would not have been so prominent. After Marston Moor in 1644, Cromwell's star really rose. Cromwell's destiny would have been dependent on his own response. However, if he continued to oppose Charles and refused to accept his authority, he would have been executed for treason.

Would Charles now have complete power over the English Parliament?

Morrill: In the unlikely event of Charles winning an all-out victory, he would have attempted to resume Personal Rule [the period from 1629 to 1640 when he didn't call Parliament]. With no foreign threat and the economy bouncing back from the wartime recession, he could probably have managed on the funds available but being Charles there would likely have been provocations. The genie of Puritanism was out of the bottle and it is almost impossible to see him behaving as sensibly as his son did in managing that problem.

Would England have regressed as a country without having a parliament?

Langley: Following the 1641 Triennial Act [requiring that Parliament meet for at least a 50-day session once every three years], Parliament would certainly have been recalled. The question of 'when' is more tricky. I am inclined toward thinking that Charles would have recalled a purged Parliament and pressured it to pass acts against treasonable figures. Of course, Charles would have had to deal with the 'ordinances' (rather than full-blown 'acts') that Parliament had passed in his absence. As many of these were associated with cash generation, one is inclined to feel that Charles would have kept some of them and rubber-stamped them as full acts. Following the fears of social unrest, the return to stability may have been greeted happily in some quarters. Parliament had already obtained concessions from Charles, so England would not have emerged from a Royalist victory as an absolutist state. Despite the 11 years when Charles ruled without a parliament, he had no designs on serious reform along the lines we see by 'absolutist' French kings later in the century.

What would have been the religious response?

Langley: Charles was committed to a broad Church of England with himself at the head, buttressed by a series of archbishops. In the event of any victory, Charles could not simply turn the clock back. If a decisive victory occurred before 1646 (when the Westminster Assembly abolished key parts of the Anglican Church) then less work would have had to be done.

What if...

CHARLES I HAD WON THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR?

"If Cromwell continued to oppose Charles and refused to accept his authority, he would have been executed for treason"



What if... CHARLES I HAD WON THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR?



"We might have got the 1921 partition [of Ireland] into Catholic South and Protestant North 300 years earlier"

ABOVE

Charles erecting the Royal Standard at Nottingham. This flag would have been flown at every major town in England had he won the war

How would Ireland and Scotland have fared under Charles' continued kingship?

Langley: Charles governed Scotland like his father: in absentia. I cannot see Charles becoming any more 'hands on' with Scotland if he had been victorious in England. The idea of one religious policy for England, Scotland and Ireland may have slowed down, but it was something to which Charles was committed. An English invasion of Scotland would have been avoided as it would have opened divisions in the English - many English puritans still saw Scotland's Presbyterians as a beacon of hope and may have sided with them.

As for Ireland, the situation was different. Charles had significant pockets of support but more decisive action would have been needed. Victory in England would have allowed Charles to either change tactic or break off negotiations with the Catholic Confederation altogether. While Dublin and the Pale remained largely loyal, it is difficult to envisage Charles quelling Irish resistance without a land invasion.

Morrill: Charles could have left Scotland well alone. He had cut a deal with them in 1641 which we would nowadays call devolution max - self-determination and self-governance with him as puppet king. He could have tried to divide and rule, but it would have been low on his list of priorities as he tried to rebuild in England. Ireland as early as late-1642 was 85 per cent under Irish-Catholic control and he might well have cut a deal with the Irish Confederation - a kind of devolution max - so as not to have to pour money into reconquering Ireland. We might even have got the 1921 partition into Catholic South

Pressure to reform the Church would have continued to exist and some Presbyterians at the Westminster Assembly were already pushing for a middle way.

Morrill: Charles believed he would answer to God for his actions as head of the Church. He also believed the Church of

England was both Catholic and Reformed - that it was in direct descent from the apostolic church but had thrown off the corruptions introduced in worship and practice by bishops and patriarchs of Rome who had also claimed authority over all other patriarchs.

How would it be different?

Real timeline

1628

- **Petition of Right**
After numerous disagreements over tax, Parliament forces Charles I to sign a petition reducing non-parliamentary taxation and imprisonments without trial.
1628



- **War with France ends**
Following a series of defeats, England ends its involvement with the Thirty Years' War and makes peace with France and Spain. The end of English involvement means Charles has less need to raise taxes, and thus less need of Parliament.
1629

● Personal rule

After further disagreements in government sessions, Charles dissolves Parliament and rules personally for 11 years without calling Parliament even once.
1629



- **Grand Remonstrance**
As rebellions are quashed in Ireland, Parliament presents to Charles the Grand Remonstrance, a list of grievances. Parliament looks to take full control over the English Army.
October 1641

● Attempted arrests

Charles, accompanied by 400 soldiers, attempts to arrest five members of the House of Commons on charges of treason. This attempt fails, as they are not present and the speaker of the house pledges his loyalty to Parliament.
October 1641

● The Civil War begins

Civil war now seems inevitable and Charles flees to Nottingham from London. Both forces prepare for war and cities declare which side they are supporting.

August 1642

Real timeline

Alternate timeline

and Protestant North 300 years earlier!

What would have England been like in 1651 after a royalist victory?

Langley: Some historians have described the Cromwellian 1650s as a 'police state.' Charles may have feared similar dissent from disaffected individuals and chosen to do something about the unregulated printed presses in London and tried to control their output. The presence of many troops created problems for the Cromwellian regime - I see no reason why an army would not have caused Charles a headache, too. In Scotland, demobilised troops would have gone back to fight in the final stages of the Thirty Years' War.

The religious experiments that took place in the 1650s under Cromwell would have been totally different under Charles. Charles would have attempted to settle England back to an Anglican middle-way - and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that moderate Anglicans dotted throughout 1650s England would have welcomed it. Religious dissent would have gone underground - like before the war - but would have perhaps led to problems in subsequent decades for Stuart rule.

How would it have affected the likelihood of future revolutions in other nations?

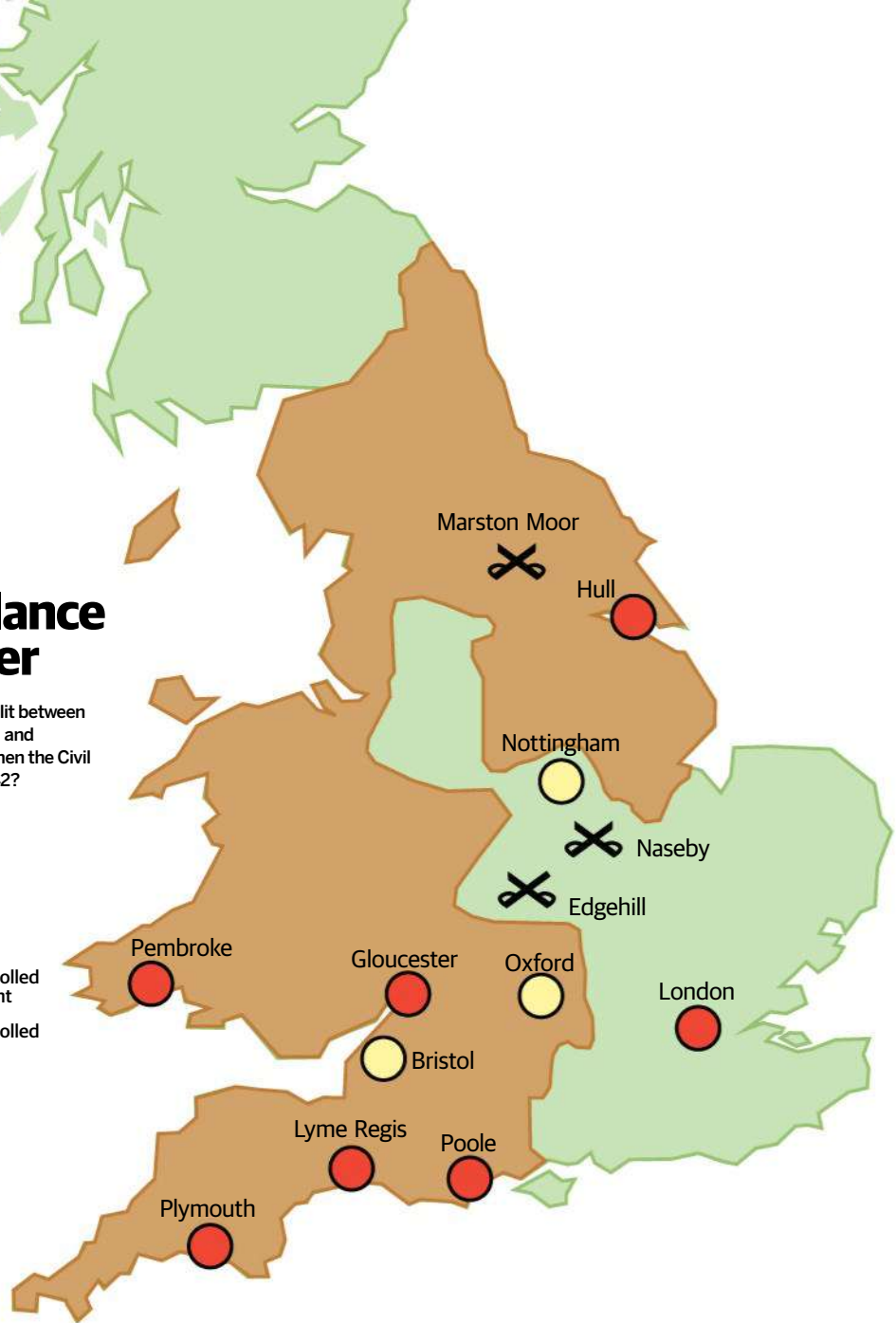
Morrill: The inspiration of the English Revolution for later revolutions is precisely that; the revolution of 1649 and the extraordinary outpouring of radical writing in the years 1646-59 - Milton, Harrington, Algernon Sidney, Cromwell. If there was no 1649 revolution, none of those might have happened.

The balance of power

How was England split between support for Charles I and Cromwell's forces when the Civil War broke out in 1642?

Key to the map

-  Royalist territory
-  Parliament territory
-  Towns controlled by Parliament
-  Towns controlled by Royalists
-  Key battles



● Unsuccessful siege of Hull

Royalist forces unsuccessfully besiege Kingston Upon Hull and fail to gain access to the city's armouries.
July 1642

● The New Model Army

A speech by Cromwell to Parliament overrides the military high command and gives all power to this new military force.
February 1645



● Battle of Naseby

A decisive victory for the Parliamentarians sees Charles flee to Scotland. He is eventually sent back to London to face his enemy and the charges they bring against him.
June 1645



● Battle of Marston Moor

The royalists gain several small victories until Parliamentarian cavalry rout Charles' men at the Battle of Marston Moor in North Yorkshire.
July 1644



● Parliament disbanded

With no organised force to oppose him, Charles strips Parliament of its power and purges any of his political rivals. Oliver Cromwell refuses to accept his king's victory and is executed.
January 1643

● Church control

Charles tightens his grip on religious affairs by becoming the self-proclaimed head of the Church of England, with personally hand-picked bishops in support.
1645

● Charles executed

Despite many Parliamentarians not wanting to put the king on trial, he is and is found guilty of a "traitorously and maliciously levied war against the present Parliament and the people therein represented." Charles does not recognise the legality of the trial and refuses to defend himself. The king is beheaded.
30 January 1649

● Successful siege of Hull

By bribing the city's governor, Kingston-Upon-Hull opens its gates to royalist forces and they fully equip their arsenal for the march south.
July 1642

● The march south

After victory at Edgehill, London is besieged by Charles. Cromwell's forces fall and the capital and Parliament come back under Caroline rule.
October 1642

● Loyal to the king

Cromwell's New Model Army is dismantled and a new royal army is created, loyal and answering only to a victorious King Charles.
1644

● War in Europe

Shying away from an invasion of Scotland or Ireland, Charles' head turns to Europe where he attempts to restart the Thirty Years' War.
1647

● Revolts

Uprisings are common throughout the country but with no organised revolution on the horizon, England remains firmly under monarchical rule once more.
1649

What if...

ENGLAND HAD REMAINED A REPUBLIC?

With no ruling monarchy and no Christmas, what would a continuing republic have looked like?

INTERVIEW WITH John Morrill

Professor John Morrill is an expert on the English Civil War and the Interregnum. He taught at Trinity College, Oxford and is the author of *Oliver Cromwell: The Brave, Bad Man Of British History*.

Following the Roundhead victory at the end of the English Civil War, King Charles I of England was executed. Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the new republic, took charge but refused the crown himself. For the next 11 years, in a period known as the Interregnum, Cromwell and Parliament ruled over a now strictly puritan nation. Festivals such as Christmas and Easter were banned and theatres were closed. But following Cromwell's death and the lacklustre reception of his successor, Charles II returned to England and the monarchy was restored. However, is it possible that if a different successor was chosen, the English republic could have continued?

What was the situation in England upon the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658?

Complicated. On the one hand the nation was secure and there was no realistic prospect of any uprisings attempting to overthrow the regime. Over the previous years all Royalist opposition had been disarmed and dispirited. There's a Presbyterian who says of Cromwell that "I Will not oppose him, but he deserves to be hanged for a fool If he thinks that I will help him if once he stumbles". In other words, he's achieved acquiescence but he lacks popular support. I think it's important to remember that we are not only talking about England but Scotland, Wales and Ireland too. The regime is secure, but only because it's got a very large military establishment and very tight military control. For example, there is a significant series of garrisons in Scotland, and they're important not

only for intimidating the population and reminding them that there's no point in rebelling, but also because the military officers stationed there act as magistrates and local governors. So it's a highly militarised regime. In Ireland 40 per cent of all land was transferred from Irish Catholics to English Protestants and 40,000 Catholic soldiers deported, but the problem is that he's running out of money. The large funds needed to support the military establishment always outstripped even the very high levels of taxation that were in place.

Initially, that problem was resolved by selling the land of cathedrals, the bishops, the crown and 800 'malignant' royalists. Eventually, they ran out of land to sell and were forced to use credit. Interest rates went up and Cromwell had already alienated the main money men in London - he'd not honoured his promises

to prioritise them in the redistribution of land in Ireland. However, Cromwell was aware that if he cuts back on the army and significantly reduces the military presence then it's possible there might be unrest, particularly in Scotland and Ireland. So things are not entirely secure.

So how much of the eventual collapse of the republic is due to Richard Cromwell's effectiveness as a leader?

A number of historians have made attempts to rehabilitate Richard Cromwell. For example Jason Peacey, a very good historian, believes that he was really nowhere near as bad a leader as he was made out to be. Personally, I'm not so sure. One problem regarding Richard's succession is that Oliver Cromwell, under the constitution of 1657, was required to nominate his own successor. There wasn't any other mechanism through which



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RIGHT

The brutal English civil wars saw King Charles I executed and Britain plunged into a Puritan Republic

What if...
ENGLAND HAD REMAINED A REPUBLIC?

Deal
with it



THE PAST

1660

THE RESTORATION

Following Richard's disastrous rule he was forced to flee. Parliament would eventually choose to restore the monarchy and Charles II was invited back to once again rule over his former kingdoms. In a ceremony on 23 April 1661 he was crowned, the delay partly being due to the fact that a new crown had to be made as the previous one had been melted during the years of the republic. His reign was a troubled one, thanks to outbreaks of plague, the disaster of the Great Fire of London and defeat in the Second Anglo-Dutch War.



1660 – 1710

RESTORATION COMEDY

By order of Parliament, on 6 September 1642, London's theatres were closed and would remain so for the next 18 years. Under Cromwell, this form of entertainment was seen as 'ungodly' and so was banned. However, upon Charles II's return theatre once again flourished. In particular, comedy proved extremely popular. 'Comedy of Manners', as the style of this period became known, was a form that poked fun at the behaviours and societal norms of the day. Many restoration comedies are still performed to this day.



1688 – 1689

GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

Following the death of Charles II, his brother, James II, became king. James quickly proved himself to be an unpopular ruler and pushed England to the brink of another civil war. William of Orange and his wife Mary arrived in England with an army and James was removed from the throne. Their reign saw more limits placed on the power of the monarchy and greater rights given to parliament.



ABOVE-LEFT

The death mask of Oliver Cromwell. At the end of his rule the republic was in financial difficulties

ABOVE-RIGHT

During his return to England, Charles II stopped in Rotterdam. If the republic had not fallen, would the monarchy have remained in exile?



ABOVE

Oliver Cromwell's son, Richard, who lacked the vision and charisma to be a successful ruler

someone could legitimately take charge. On the day before his death, Cromwell is said to have been delirious and murmured Richard's name to an appreciative audience - but of course if he hadn't they'd be in a real pickle! But there's also quite a strong possibility that Cromwell had written a nomination and given it to his secretary of state John Thurloe, who was a master of steaming out sealed documents. WH Dawson in the 1930s argued that Cromwell had actually nominated John Lambert but the council suppressed this and claimed he nominated Richard instead. So there's added complications to Richard's succession.

How was he as a leader? He lacked charisma but also a clear vision. That's pretty fatal when he's surrounded by powerful people who do have visions but they clash with one another. It's possible he was put in because everyone thought that he was weak and that they could control him. He seems to have been paralysed into inactivity, all the while the financial situation continues to deteriorate and army unrest continues to grow.

Could Cromwell's son in law, Henry Ireton, or John Lambert have made effective leaders?

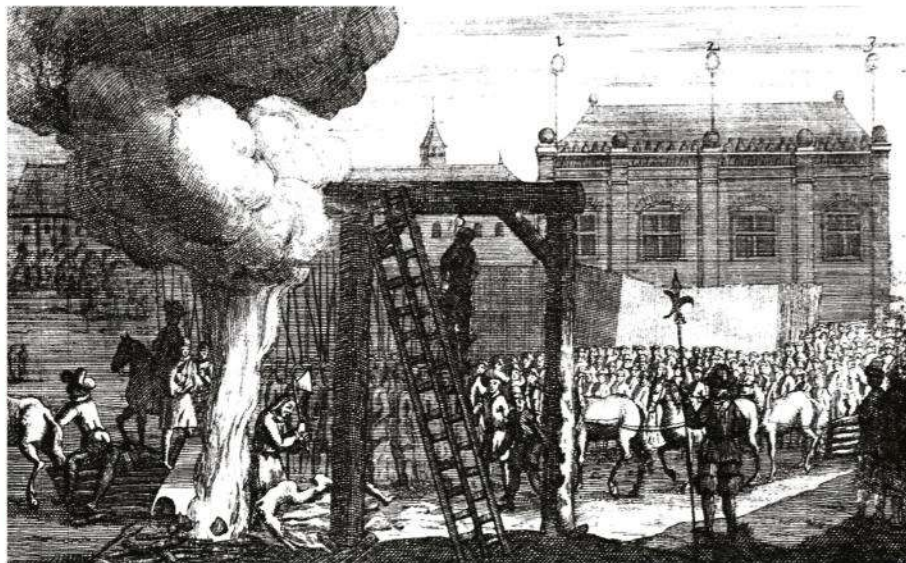
Years earlier Henry Ireton might have seemed the obvious successor but I've often thought that, prior to his death, there had been a pretty catastrophic

falling out between him and Cromwell. Although there had been a close bond between them, towards the end of Cromwell's time in Ireland he seems to be really demoting Ireton. What the latter could have brought is a very clear legal mind. He was less fiercely puritan than Cromwell and most likely would have been very concerned with getting a written constitution that really worked. In Ireland he likely would have been very hardline and interested in dispossessing the remaining Catholic population. But I'm not entirely sure that if he had survived he would have been a tremendously attractive alternative.

On the other hand, if there was an envelope containing John Lambert's name, then that's a more intriguing possibility. Let's assume that Lambert was in fact Cromwell's nominee. What would that mean? Lambert came from solid Yorkshire gentry stock, more solid than Cromwell and so he would have been an attractive figure for the gentry. He's committed to a broad religious settlement, but he doesn't have Cromwell's zeal and doesn't have Cromwell's desire to build a new Jerusalem. He also has an unblemished military record and had been a highly successful general in the north and then in Scotland. He is much more considered and moderate than anyone else and there is a possibility that he could have been successful. But how he would have solved the financial difficulties, I don't know.

So if the republic had continued, what could it have looked like?

The most obvious thing is it wouldn't have been Anglican, there would still have been a broad national church based on



puritan principles together with a very broad toleration for others. The second thing is that I think the configuration of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales would have remained very different. Under the protectorate, there was a single parliament for the whole of these islands for the only time before 1801. There would not have been the restoration of Irish and Scottish Parliaments as there was in 1660 and there would not have been a large degree of devolution with executive functions and judicial functions. Most likely, it would have been a very colonial system. With Englishmen, acting as chief executives and boards in Scotland. I think the process of colonisation and acculturation in Scotland and Ireland would have been a major, long-term difference.

Would it have remained strictly Puritan? In particular, could you see festivals such as Christmas returning?

To an extent they already were. Despite Puritan attempts, aspects of traditional Anglican religious culture were creeping back, particularly around festivals like Christmas. In fact, there were still Christmas festivities in a large number of churches. For example, the Puritans had tried to replace the old Anglican system, in which people took communion only at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, with monthly communion services. But in most parish churches it's quite clear they are still celebrating communion at Christmas and Easter. They may be using some more puritanical forms, but they are remembering these are the great festivals. So there are lots of people who are using the Book of Common Prayer for baptisms,

ABOVE
Following the collapse of the republic, the bodies of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton and John Bradshaw were posthumously executed



ABOVE
Was General John Lambert chosen as Cromwell's actual successor?

weddings, funerals, and accommodating semi-Puritan forms of festivals such as Christmas. So it is possible we would have seen a new form of the Sacraments, still not fundamentally Anglican, but with these ideas creeping back.

What do you think could be some implications for today?

It's almost impossible to say. However, I do think there are two societal impacts that we can trace back to the Interregnum. The first is that in England, since the 17th century, there has been a deep suspicion of religious fanaticism. There hasn't ever been the kind of religious extremism that you find in the history of most European countries. Indeed, I think there's a fear of fanaticism in general. You can even take this further as Britain was probably the least affected by the totalitarian movements of the 1930s and 1940s. There is a kind of societal fear of a return to a rather false memory of what the mid 17th century was all about. You see this in the lack of revolutionary fervour in Britain during the French Revolution and the decades afterwards. The second is that there has never been any move in Britain back to having military heroes as political leaders. Wellington is a partial exception, but he becomes prime minister 15 years after Waterloo and he's more of a figurehead. There's a suspicion that you don't want military leaders with strong support in the armed forces, as political leaders. However, if you look around the world, you'll find that pretty unusual. If England had remained a republic, it's impossible to say whether this suspicion of religious fanaticism or the lack of military heroes as political leaders would have occurred.

THE POSSIBILITY

1660

OLIVER CROMWELL – HERO?

In the autumn of 1660, the bodies of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton and John Bradshaw were removed from their graves at the orders of Charles II. The bodies were taken to the gallows at Tyburn where they hung from chains before being beheaded. For the next 25 years, the heads were placed on a large spike outside Westminster Hall. However, one night a storm dislodged Cromwell's head. For centuries the head passed through various hands, even appearing in a touring 'freak show' before being buried at Sidney Sussex College in the 20th century. Had the republic continued it's highly doubtful he would have received such treatment and may have been treated as a national hero.



1706 – 1707

A SCOTTISH COLONY?

The Treaty of Union and the Acts of Union, passed in 1706 and 1707 overseen by Queen Anne, resulted in the creation of Great Britain and united England and Scotland.

However, as John Morrill suggests, had a republic continued it is likely that these acts would never have occurred. Instead, England may have taken a more colonial approach to rule in Scotland.



2023

NO MORE MONARCHY?

Since Charles II was restored to the throne, there have been 16 subsequent monarchs. The current king, Charles III was crowned on 6 May 2023. However, if the republic had continued, what position would the monarchy be in? Would they have died out in exile? Or would there have been further civil wars as they sought to regain the throne?



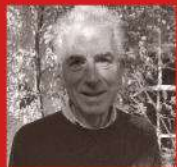
All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

What if...

SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND HAD NOT UNIFIED?

The Act Of Union in 1707 transformed the political landscape of the British Isles, but what if it had never occurred?

INTERVIEW WITH



Iain Milligan

A retired QC, Iain Milligan read law at Cambridge, taking silk in 1991. His book *Sovereign Of The Isles: How The British Isles Were Won By The Crown*, explores how the English won sovereignty over the British Isles and the formation of the union with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

What are some of the key events leading up to the union between England and Scotland?

When Margaret, the Maid of Norway and uncrowned queen of Scotland, died in 1290, she had been betrothed to the future King Edward II of England. Had she not died, centuries of warfare between Scotland and England might have been forestalled. As it was, in 1503 a temporary lull in the hostilities was brought about by the Treaty of Perpetual Peace between James IV of Scotland and Henry VII of England - pursuant to which Henry's daughter, Margaret Tudor, was married to James. This set the first scene of the union between the kingdoms.

A century later and after further hostilities, the great-grandson of that marriage, James VI, already king of Scotland, succeeded to the throne of England [as James I] on the death of his cousin, Elizabeth I. As a king with two crowns, James realised immediately

that it would be expedient for the two kingdoms to be united. To that end a treaty was concluded the following year, however neither parliament ever gave unconditional effect to it.

Although James VI and I was a Protestant, his grandson [James II] had converted to Roman Catholicism by the time he succeeded in 1685. To thwart the threat of a Catholic dynasty, a cabal of conspirators persuaded the king's Protestant son-in-law, William of Orange, to invade England. The following year, after James II had fled with his court to France, William and his wife, Mary - also a Protestant - were established by the parliaments of both kingdoms as king and queen. This was specifically on terms that no Catholic should ever succeed to the throne of either kingdom.

In 1702 Mary's Protestant sister, Anne, succeeded to both thrones. By 1706 economically Scotland was on its knees. This was partly because its principal

trading partners had for some years been at war with England and the targets of English blockades, partly because of anticompetitive English legislation, and partly because of the disastrous failure of Scotland's Darien venture in the Caribbean. But as tensions escalated between the two kingdoms, the Scottish parliament arrogated to itself the power to make war or peace and to nominate the successor to the Scottish throne.

Union between the two kingdoms was seen to be the solution to Scotland's hopeless economic condition and England's fear of a divergence between the crowns or - worse still - a Catholic dynasty in Scotland.

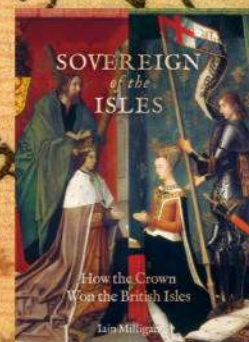
What were the immediate effects of unification on Scotland?

On the plus side, the Scottish economy was given a new lease of life. The Articles Of Union removed all barriers to trade between the two former kingdoms;



RIGHT Illustration of the Battle of Prestonpans during the second Jacobite rebellion

What if...
SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND HAD NOT UNIFIED?



**Sovereign Of
The Isles** by
Iain Milligan,
is out now
from Unicorn
Publishing

THE PAST

1503

MARRIAGE OF MARGARET TUDOR

The marriage between Margaret Tudor and James IV on 8 August 1503 would be seen as the foundation stone for the unification that would occur two centuries later. Margaret was only 13 while James IV was 30 and had a history with many mistresses previously. Supposedly Margaret never quite adjusted to the more boisterous Scottish court, but would bear James six children.

Following his death she married twice more and would become involved in numerous power struggles.



Image source: wiki/ Royal Collection

1701-14

WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

Following the death of Charles II, Spain was left without an heir to its throne. A treaty had been signed by England, the Dutch Republic and France dictating that Prince Joseph Ferdinand should inherit Spain. However, due to his death, a second treaty was signed but this too failed, with the result being that France invaded the Spanish Netherlands.

An anti-French alliance was formed, with Scotland fighting alongside England against her old and trusted ally, France.



Image source: wiki/ Antique Maps of Spain

1960s

OIL IN THE NORTH SEA

The discovery of North Sea oil was made in the 1960s, with the first well drilled in 1967. A much more significant find was made in 1969, when Amoco's Montrose field was drilled. It was not until 1975 that the first North Sea oil came ashore, arriving at Cruden Bay in Aberdeenshire. At one point, some 80 wells were being drilled simultaneously. The distribution of oil revenues remains controversial.



Image source: wiki/ Royal Collection Trust

made substantial economic concessions to the Scots; compensated them for the standardisation of the coinage, the colossal losses of the Darien Scheme and the public debts of the Scottish Crown; and provided subsidies for various commercial enterprises.

On the minus side, the Scots were saddled with a Protestant king or queen according to the English rules of succession and were at war with their oldest ally, France, as part of the War Of The Spanish Succession.

Moving forward through successive centuries, what were some of the later effects?

Dissatisfaction with the Union among many of the Scots, particularly in the Highlands and among both Catholics and Episcopalians, found expression in the Jacobite risings of 1708, 1715/16, 1719 and 1745/46. The first was derailed by Louis XIV of France countermanding support at the last moment; the second fizzled out following defeat by Government forces at Sheriffmuir; the third ended in defeat in Glenshiel; and the fourth ended in carnage on Culloden Moor at the hands of the duke of Cumberland.

The defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden established the sovereignty of the Protestant House of Hanover once and for all, but did nothing to quell dissatisfaction with the Union. However, enthusiasm to end the Union was kept in check by a variety of circumstances. First, a massive expansion of the armed forces recruited initially from the Highlands and then more generally to fight three great wars: the Seven Years' War in Europe and North America (1756-63), the American War of Independence (1775-83) and the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815). This gave employment to many who might



TOP The defeat of the Jacobites at the Battle Of Culloden

ABOVE The Act of Union is read before Queen Anne

otherwise have been disenchanted, particularly due to the clearance of the population of the Highlands to give the land over to sheep. Secondly, widespread emigration to exploit the opportunities in the rapidly growing British Empire or to escape the poverty at home meant that the emigrants had little further interest in the Union. Thirdly, until the passing of the Scottish Reform Act in 1832, political power lay principally with the landed gentry who tended to be supportive of the Union. However, by 1885 the franchise in Scotland had been expanded to include many of the working class.

The first concrete signs of Scottish nationalism emerged, starting with the founding of the National Association For The Vindication Of Scottish Rights in 1853, and culminating with the devolution of power to the Scottish Parliament in 1998.

What could some of the immediate national implications have been had unification not occurred?

James VII and II had died in 1701 and, but for the terms on which William and

Mary had been accepted as king and queen of both kingdoms, he would have been succeeded by his son, James Edward Stuart, known as the Old Pretender. On the death of Queen Anne in 1714, had the two kingdoms not been united there was every chance that the Old Pretender would have been acclaimed as James VIII of Scotland, particularly if he had abandoned his Catholic faith or his supporters had shown more initiative than they did.

However, James VIII would have been the king of an impoverished nation. It would not have enjoyed the prosperity which it subsequently enjoyed as a commercial and industrial powerhouse of the British Empire. And the growth of its economy would almost certainly have been stifled by tariffs on what in the event was its burgeoning trade with England and the English colonies.

However, all of that would have changed dramatically with the discovery of oil in the North Sea in the middle of the last century. On whatever approach had been adopted to define the boundary between the territorial seas of Scotland and England had they not been united, something of the order of 90% of the United Kingdom's oil resources in the North Sea would have been Scottish. Although it is a much-debated subject, the Scots might have been significantly better off had they not shared the oil and all other revenues with the rest of the United Kingdom under the Barnett Formula.

Since the Union, there have so far been 11 prime ministers of Great Britain who hailed from Scotland, starting with the earl of Bute in 1762 and ending with Gordon Brown in 2010. Without the Union, what would have happened? The players on what would have been two different political stages would undoubtedly have been very different.

What could some of the wider global implications have been had unification between Scotland and England not occurred (both immediate and later in history)?

What became known as the Seven Years' War broke out in North America in 1754 and in Europe in 1756. Pitted against each other were Great Britain and France battling for supremacy. Had there been no Union between Scotland and England, it is likely that Scotland would have renewed her Auld Alliance with France, just as the Jacobites had done in 1745. With the Scots on the opposite side and at England's back door, the outcome might have been very different. Much of North America might well have become a French colony and

"Come World War II, would the Scots have been neutral like the Irish?"

there might never have been a War of Independence or even the United States.

In 1793, in the wake of the French Revolution, France declared war on Great Britain. Had there been no Union, the Scots might well have allied themselves with France. What would have happened at the Battle of Waterloo had there been no charge - famously depicted - of the Royal Scots Greys? Or if the charge been directed at the English forces rather than the French?

Come World War II, would the Scots have been neutral, like the Irish, with a similar sense of resentment against England? With the fall of France in 1940, leaving England standing alone against Germany in Europe, would Hitler have had the courage of his convictions about Operation Sealion and invaded England? Or even invaded Scotland - like Belgium, notwithstanding its neutrality - as a stepping stone to England?

Scotland, as an independent state, would almost certainly have joined the European Economic Community in 1973 and, like Ireland, would have freed itself from the dependence of its trade on England and prospered greatly, possibly even becoming a net contributor to the EU budget in 2013 on the back of its oil revenues.

BELOW

John Stuart, the 3rd Earl of Bute was the first Scottish-born Prime Minister of Britain following the Act of Union



THE POSSIBILITY

1815

THE SCOTS GREYS AT WATERLOO

The Scots Greys was a cavalry regiment that unusually carried infantry weapons such as muskets and pistols. The Greys most famous moment came at the Battle of Waterloo. Having missed the action at the Battle of Quatre Bras the night before, the Greys were dismayed to discover they were being kept in reserve. Witnessing the fellow Scots brigade, the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, retreating, Lieutenant Colonel James Inglis Hamilton ordered his men to attack. As the Greys fell upon their enemy, Sergeant Charles Ewart was even able to seize a French Imperial Eagle standard. One wonders the effect had the Scots Greys been on the side of the French...



1939-45

A NEUTRAL SCOTLAND?

At the outbreak of WWII Ireland had been independent for only 17 years. With a number of its own internal security problems as well as economic issues, Ireland remained neutral for the entire duration of the conflict. With the fall of France in 1940, Britain's attitude to Ireland hardened further and a supply squeeze was felt by the country. Following this, Britain then cut fuel supplies and the German air force bombed the country. Is it possible that an independent Scotland would've been neutral too? And could it have been used as a springboard for a Nazi invasion of Britain?

2020

NO SCOTTISH PMS

11 British prime ministers have so far hailed from Scotland. The first was John Stuart, the 3rd Earl of Bute (also the first Tory) who led Parliament between 1762 and 1763. He was followed by William Ewart Gladstone (born in Liverpool, but to Scottish parents), who was prime minister no less than four times, James Ramsay MacDonald, and most recently Gordon Brown. An independent Scotland would have meant that none of these men would have been MPs in Westminster, let alone leaders of their respective parties in Parliament. This could have had a massive impact on the eras of history each of them were integral to shaping as prime minister.

What if...

THE JACOBITE RISING HAD SUCCEEDED?

A fruitful Anglo-French alliance means a more peaceful world

INTERVIEW WITH



**Professor
Daniel
Szechi**

Daniel Szechi is currently professor of Early Modern History at the University of Manchester. He has published extensively on the history of Jacobitism and his book, *Britain's Lost Revolution?* was published in 2015.

If the Jacobites had reached London, they would have needed French assistance to succeed. Bonnie Prince Charlie's forces only numbered 5,000 men, and even if they had defeated the British Army, they then had a city of 500,000 people to dominate. "However, the French were preparing to invade and planning on landing in Essex. So if Charlie gets to London and the French land, you have a potential Jacobite restoration," says Professor Szechi.

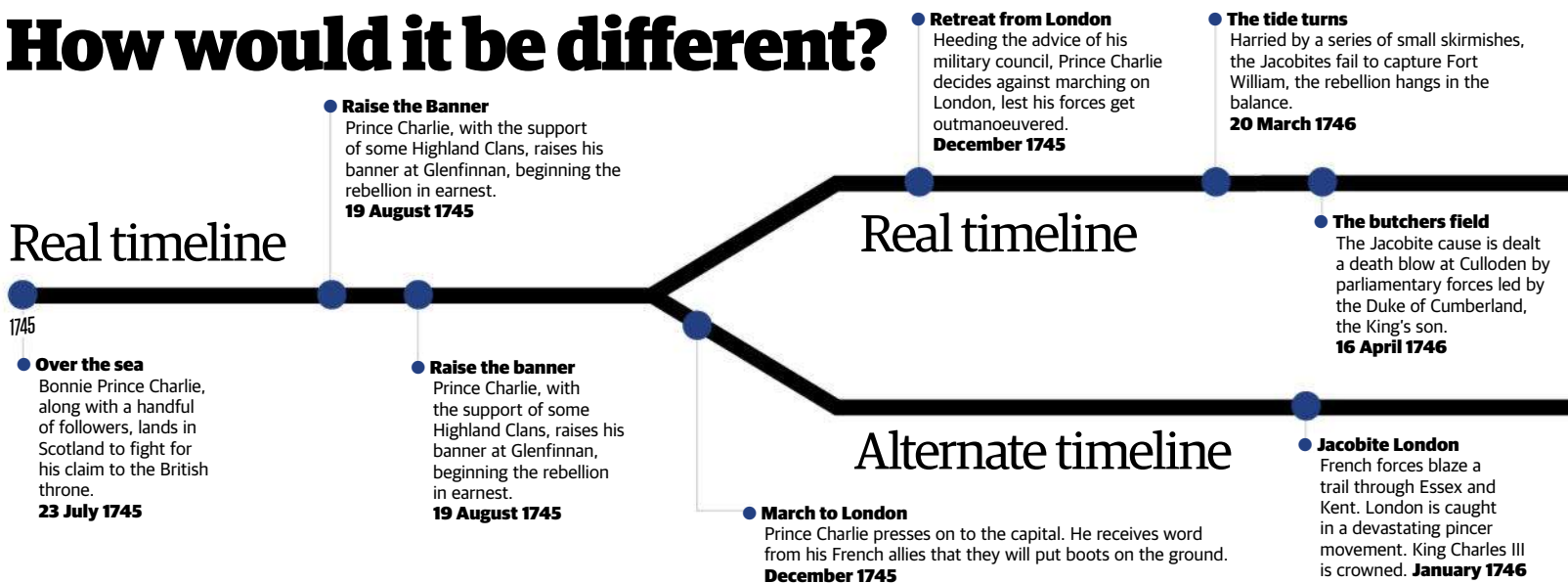
The Jacobites would have required constant French support, but they were fully behind the Young Pretender and were hopeful that a victory in London would knock the British out of the War of the Austrian Succession. It wouldn't have been all plain sailing for Charlie though, and King George II, who would have fled to Portsmouth, wasn't going to let go of

the throne that easily. "The Hanoverians would have set up an alternative capital in Birmingham or Bristol, and England would have become the seat of a major war. There is a range of opinion that the Hanoverian regime would have collapsed if they had lost London. Its support was intrinsically brittle and there would have been widespread defections by people who would have been otherwise neutral. I think there would have been full-scale civil war... It would have been very, very hard to say but Charlie and his supporters would have had the support of French regular troops so they could fight and defeat the British army in a straightforward face-off."

There's a Jacobite king on the throne and a strong Anglo-French alliance - international relations start to look a bit different. Firstly, Charlie, not being a religious man, maintains Protestantism

in England and maybe would have even converted to Anglicanism himself. This accelerates religious toleration in the British Isles by about 100 years. Over in the New World, there are even bigger upshots: "The American Revolution was on the verge of collapse when the French intervened. The French saved America. No French intervention, no US. It would just have been a brief rebellion that the British government would have crushed." This in turn would have prevented a revolution in France as the people would have been satisfied with this new fruitful alliance with their neighbours over the Channel. This alternative timeline would have had profound effects on the rest of Europe too. "The combination of British naval power and French land power might have made for a more peaceful Europe. It would have been daunting for Prussia, Austria or Spain

How would it be different?



The March of the Forty-Five

After a number of failed uprisings, the Jacobites rose once again in 1745. Led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, their objective was to initiate a Stuart restoration to the British throne. By December, the Jacobite army had reached as far south as Derby and faced a dilemma: press on to London or return north?

to take on the combination." Conversely, would this new Anglo-French alliance have had aggressive tendencies itself? "It's possible Britain and France could have ploughed eastward, but the French didn't have territorial ambitions against the Austrians. They just wanted to make sure they didn't become powerful enough to threaten the eastern frontier of France."

If the March of the Forty-Five had succeeded and held off an inevitable Hanoverian counter-attack, it would have had a profound outcome. No Napoleonic Wars and no US are two potentially huge changes, and going into the 20th century we may have seen a very different, and potentially more peaceful, world.



● Blood in the glens

The government forces brutally sack the highlands, earning Cumberland the nickname 'Butcher'. Highland culture and dress are suppressed.

1746

● The drunk pretender

Charles flees to Europe and would never make another attempt on the throne. He grows drunk and bitter in his old age.

1746-1788

● American Revolutionary War

Fighting against British repression, the Thirteen Colonies, aided by the French and Spanish, gain their independence as the United States of America.

19 April 1775

● Britain vs France

After the abolition of the French monarchy, Napoleon becomes Emperor and plunges Europe into a bloody series of conflicts.

1803-1815

● Statue of Liberty

A gift of solidarity from France, the statue is constructed in Manhattan and symbolises America's freedom from Great Britain.

1886

● Major border changes

Without Britain, the Dutch and Austrians are defeated in the War of the Austrian Succession against France, Prussia and Spain.

July 1746

● American Revolution crushed

With French aid, the Thirteen Colonies are soon crushed. The Redcoats aren't kind to the rebels and enact even harsher constraints than before.

February 1776

● Europe at peace

Napoleon remains just a revolutionary idealist. Austria, the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia never pluck up the courage to strike against the Anglo-French alliance.

April 1792

● Victoria statue commissioned

To celebrate their ongoing alliance, the French begin work on the Queen Victoria statue that will stand in New York.

1877

● Second Civil War

The Jacobites initially struggle to keep order. With French support, Charles III convincingly beats down any resistance as George II is executed.

February 1746

● Long-term alliance

Britain and France become the strongest military bloc in the world on both land and sea and are universally feared.

18th century

● No French Revolution

A much healthier and a happier population means Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette rule on under an extended and rejuvenated House of Bourbon.

January 1793

● Germany backs down

After a fair amount of saber rattling, Germany decides against challenging the overwhelming military power of the Anglo-French Alliance.

1914

What if...

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HAD SPREAD TO BRITAIN?

In 1789 revolutionary forces stormed the Bastille, but could the guillotine have come to Greenwich?

INTERVIEW WITH

Image courtesy of Lily Rapport



Michael Rapport

Dr Michael Rapport is a historian based at the University of Glasgow who specialises in the French Revolution and its global impact. His books include *Rebel Cities: Paris, London And New York In The Age Of Revolution* and *1848: Year Of Revolution*.

In 1700s France the so-called 'Third Estate', comprising everyone from peasant farmers to the bourgeoisie, were not happy. Politically they were invisible to both the First and Second Estates (the classes who wielded the most power) and, despite their poverty, were often subject to high taxation. The intellectual ideas of the Enlightenment began to preach the rights of the common man over the elites and following the extravagant spending of King Louis XVI, France's involvement in the American Revolutionary wars and other additional factors, France erupted into revolution. In 1793, this would lead to execution of the monarchy. A revolutionary wave swept across Europe but in Britain, despite fears to the contrary, there was no people's uprising. Was it ever a possibility? And what could have happened had the masses taken to the streets?

What were some of the responses to the French Revolution in Britain?

Initially, both politically and ideologically, there was an awful lot of enthusiasm and a sense that the French were becoming a bit more like Britain after 1688, forging a constitutional monarchy. There was also a radical movement, which embraced the French Revolution as a cause for parliamentary reform of Britain. At this stage Britain wasn't a democracy; far from it. Parliament primarily represented landed interest. However there were some notes of caution as well. In his book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* Edmund Burke basically said that this wasn't going to end well. In

the British government, William Pitt believed that because France was so tied up with internal efforts to reform that effectively Britain didn't have to worry too much and Europe would be at peace for quite a long time.

How did the government and conservative groups respond to the perceived threat?

Initially very sluggishly, until 1792 when the revolution radicalised and the monarchy was overthrown. This was the start of the slide of Britain joining the French Revolutionary Wars. However there was also concern about the radical ideas floating around Britain, including

those written by Thomas Paine. He wrote *Rights of Man*, which was a quite brilliant defence of the French Revolution. The second part, published in 1792, proposed some measures that in a sense anticipated the modern welfare state, in a very mild way. In response, the government issued a royal proclamation against seditious writings in May 1792. However, the real panic began when the French revolutionary armies spilled across Europe, conquering territory. In November 1792, The Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property was founded to challenge a burgeoning popular radical movement in Britain. The association founded branches across



RIGHT

Illustration of a meeting the United Irishmen prior to the revolution

© Getty Images

Main image sources: © Alamy

What if...
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HAD SPREAD TO BRITAIN?



What if... THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HAD SPREAD TO BRITAIN?

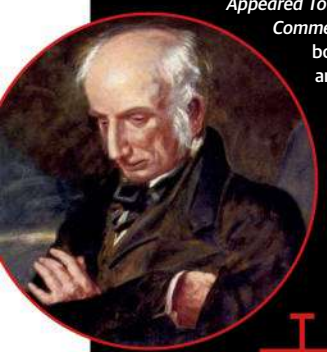
THE PAST

1790s

LITERARY IMPACT

An often overlooked effect of the French Revolution on Britain was its literary and artistic impact, which is often linked to the origins of the Romantic movement.

The Revolution rejected old ideas in favour of those of the Enlightenment, and English poets such as Samuel Taylor-Coleridge and William Wordsworth brought those sentiments into their work. Wordsworth himself would compose a poem entitled *The French Revolution As It Appeared To Enthusiasts At Its Commencement*. In 1797 both Wordsworth and Coleridge were investigated by British agents after they were suspected of being French spies, however they were dismissed as more mischievous than menacing.

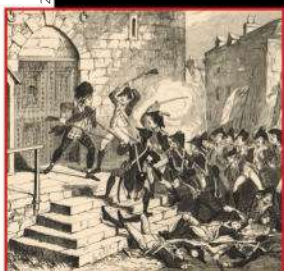


1798

FAILED REVOLUTION IN IRELAND

In 1798, The Society of United Irishmen sought to reform parliament and end British rule in Ireland. Many farmers and poor agricultural workers joined the society as it was both radicalised and militarised. The British Government feared the worst and in 1796 had passed an Insurrection Act, confiscating some private arms and suppressing the *Northern Star*, a radical newspaper. That same year France had even sent a fleet to assist, which despite most of the ships being scattered by storms, a few were able to reach Ireland. In May, fighting broke out but was primarily confined to both Ulster and Wexford. Despite some successes by June the rebellion was almost over. At this point, Wolfe Tone, a British exile living in France who had been part of the earlier fleet, obtained a handful of French ships to carry out raids along the Irish coast. However in September he was captured

in Lough Swilly, Donegal, and cut his throat with a penknife rather than be hanged. As a result of the rebellion, the Act of Union was passed, abolishing the Irish parliament.



the country to put pressure on radicals, to intimidate them and bully them into violence. Another way in which conservative groups respond was to create volunteer movements. Initially the government was reluctant because the volunteer movement was essentially creating militias, in theory to guard against French invasion, but also to act as a counter revolutionary militia against domestic radicalism.

If an English Revolution had occurred were there any groups that could have led it?

If a revolution had occurred in the mid-1790s, then the London Corresponding Society would have been the obvious choice. Between 1797 and 1799, when there was perhaps more of a possibility of revolution, the London Corresponding Society became increasingly more radical until it was formally banned in 1799. There were other underground organisations like the United Scotsman, the United Irishman (who actually started a revolution in Ireland in 1798) and the United Englishman. However, it's hard to tell how serious a threat some of these were because most of what we know about them comes from government agents and propaganda. The vast majority of British reformers insisted they weren't Jacobins and weren't in favour of a violent revolution, only reform of the House of Commons. If a revolution had occurred, it would've been led by a very small radical fringe.

Were any plans in place?

All the radical organisations had a kind of a programme of change, but more often than not it was through persuasion. They hoped they could persuade parliament that it was time to reform. In Scotland, the radical Society of the Friends of the People established what they call a Convention in Edinburgh to debate parliamentary reform and they hoped that they would act as a kind of "conscience" for parliament. They wanted it to be a kind of assembly that expressed a broad will of a very broad range of people. However, in terms of plans for actual violent revolution? They exist but most seem to come from radicals in exile. For example Wolfe Tone, an Irish Republican, spoke to the French about landing a force in Ireland to back an insurrection. There's also Thomas Muir, who had been



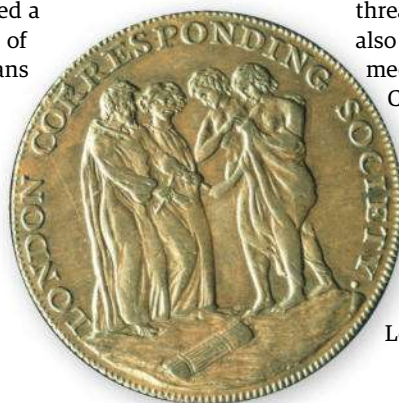
ABOVE
The execution of Louis XVI in 1793

found guilty of sedition and transported to Australia. He escaped and ended up in Revolutionary France, where he petitioned the French government to support a revolution in Scotland by landing a force. But a lot of these exiles had been out of the country for a long time and were out of touch. With Tone in Ireland the French did send a force, too late, but they sent one.

Were there any legal ramifications of the perceived threat?

Yes. There were some 23 laws against seditious writings; correspondence with France, once war had broken out, was illegal; and there was the Alien Act, empowering the government to deport anybody who they thought threatened the established order. They also passed a law against seditious meetings and banned what they called Combinations, which are the early forms of trade union. Also, there are the treason trials. In 1793, members of the Edinburgh Convention, including Thomas Muir, were tried for sedition and sentenced to transportation to Australia. In 1794, you had a range of treason trials in London. Treason was a more serious

BELOW
The medal of the London Corresponding Society





BELOW
An illustration of the capture of Wolfe Tone, who worked with the French to bring revolution to Ireland



crime and could carry the death penalty. The government said the radicals were trying to start a violent revolution, while the radicals said all they wanted was peaceful reform of parliament. The jurors weren't convinced by the government's case and the trials collapsed.

What could have been the immediate impacts of an attempted English Revolution in the late-1700s?

For an example of what might have happened had it failed, we can look to Ireland in 1798 - the repressions are pretty horrible. So the immediate impact of a failed English Revolution would have probably led to violent suppression. A successful revolution may have allowed the French in and maybe created a sister Republic out of either the entire British Isles or separate ones out of Ireland, England, Wales, etc. The French did have some vague plans as to what they might do. There's a memorandum, I think in

the French Foreign Ministry, which has what the departments of Britain would look like if there was to be a French-style revolution in Britain. London would be called the Département de la Thames (Department of the Thames) just as Paris was called the Department of the Seine.

Could it have toppled the monarchy?

It depends. Let's say that there was a copycat revolution in 1789-91 - if they were doing it along the French model it probably would have been a constitutional monarchy but with a more democratic House of Commons. After the 1790s it almost certainly would have been a Republic that would have gotten rid of the monarchy. The French would have insisted on it, if the French had come in.

What do you think the impact of an English Revolution in the late 1700s or 1800s could have been?

Let's say that there's been a successful revolution in Britain and the monarchy has been overthrown. I think the first thing is that the strategic realities probably would not have changed much in the long run. Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that Napoleon did come to power in France - you would still have other issues to deal with such as the strategic position of Russia. What might have happened, though, is that the British Empire initially might have abolished slavery earlier because the French revolutionaries abolished slavery in 1794. Napoleon reintroduced it in 1802, which led to Haitian independence, but maybe the abolitionists in Britain would have gained the upper hand. But that's probably a fantasy - the Dutch had a sister Republic and they didn't abolish slavery. Ideologically it would have established a longer revolutionary tradition in Britain. We have the revolution of the 1640s and they do execute the king in 1649, but this would have established one more attuned to ideas of natural rights and individual liberties. If there had been a violent revolution in Britain and the French had arrived, what would have happened to parliament? It probably would have been completely overhauled and we would have had, at least in the long run, two different parliamentary conditions. One monarchist with a balanced constitution and based on the idea of parliamentary sovereignty, the other Republican and based on popular sovereignty. That would have established a much bigger constitutional debate in the long run.

THE POSSIBILITY

1794

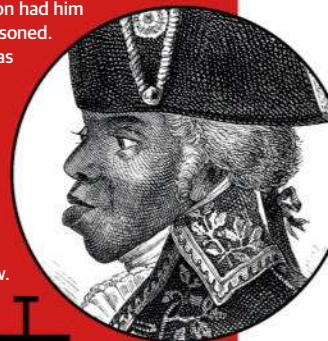
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY?

As Michael Rapport suggests, there is the possibility that a British revolution could have led to the abolition of slavery. A slave revolt in France led the revolutionaries to abolish slavery in 1794 but Napoleon would later reinstate it. In Haiti, inspired by the French Revolution as well as the horrific racist culture and brutality of slave owners, revolutionary sentiment was growing.

When citizenship status was granted to the affrancis (free individuals who were of African or mixed descent), white Europeans chose to ignore this. A slave revolt broke out and the country was torn into rival factions.

Toussaint Louverture was a former slave and general who gained control of several areas and operated an almost independent Haiti, until Napoleon had him captured and imprisoned.

By 1804, Haiti was able to claim independence. What would have happened on British colonies and whether Britain could have abolished slavery, we will never know.



1793

LONG LIVE THE KING?

Much of our popular imagery of the French Revolution comes from the execution of the monarchy, in particular Marie-Antoinette. In 1791, King Louis XVI had attempted to flee to Austria but was spotted at the French border town of Varennes, where he was arrested and returned to Paris. Having been returned to Paris the king was forced to approve a new constitution that had stripped him of most of his power. However, a mere year later he was arrested and the monarchy abolished. Placed on trial for treason, he was sentenced to execution. A violent revolution in Britain may well have led to the British monarchy suffering the same fate.



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What if...

NAPOLEON HAD WON AT TRAFALGAR?

Nelson's victory saved Britain from the threat of invasion, but could the British have lost the 1805 naval battle?

INTERVIEW WITH



Richard Harding

Professor Richard Harding is an expert in naval history and amphibious warfare and previously edited the academic journal, *The Mariner's Mirror*. Among his numerous books are *Modern Naval History: Debates and Prospects* and *Seapower and Naval Warfare: 1650-1830*.

On 21 October 1805, the naval forces of Napoleon Bonaparte and his Spanish allies faced the Royal Navy, commanded by Admiral Lord Nelson, off the coast of Trafalgar, Spain. For five hours the battle raged but the British forces were able to annihilate the enemy, destroying 19 ships. However, 1,500 British seamen lost their lives, with Nelson among them. Having been shot by a sniper in the shoulder and chest, he died when victory was imminent. The Battle of Trafalgar has become the stuff of legend, with Nelson immortalised as the man who saved Britain from invasion. Yet what if Napoleon had won on that fateful day?

What is some of the wider context leading up to Trafalgar?

Napoleon thought he would be able to trick the British and move them out of position, leaving the English Channel open. Napoleon's plan was to draw the British to the West Indies, then hopefully the French Commander Villeneuve would be able to go up the Channel and control a landing on the coast. That was never going to happen, though, because the British Channel fleet never moved. The British were well aware of this plan and everything they did was geared towards continuing to consolidate control of the Channel. I think Napoleon thought that he could threaten Britain with an invasion and pressure them into some kind of treaty. On the other side of the coin, Britain couldn't win the war with just its navy, though it could certainly defend itself. What Britain needed was allies, and they created an

alliance with Russia, Sweden and Austria that would force Napoleon that way. The intention was to keep both the Baltic and the Mediterranean open, because Britain was earning vast sums of money from trade in those areas.

What were the key factors in the Battle of Trafalgar?

The battle was a very unequal struggle, despite the number of ships broadly being the same. When Napoleon finally got the Spanish to join with France, declaring war on Britain in October 1804, there were another 28 Spanish ships which could now support the 34

French ones. Another factor is Villeneuve himself. He was from an old family and of good standing, but by this point he was totally demoralised. He had survived the Battle of the Nile and knew what Nelson was capable of doing – Nelson's intention was annihilation. Napoleon was also losing faith in Villeneuve and he knew this. So what we've got in terms of key factors is a French fleet heading out to sea heading to the Mediterranean, with a commander that is thoroughly depressed. On the other side we've got a British fleet that knew exactly what it was doing at this point and was determined that this would be a battle of



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RIGHT

John Christian Schetky's painting of the battle

What if...
NAPOLEON HAD WON AT TRAFALGAR?



THE PAST

1789-99

THE RISE OF NAPOLEON

Napoleon Bonaparte had made his name as a young officer during the French Revolution. On 5 October 1795 he was instrumental in stopping Royalist rebels who were marching on the National Convention, saving the Republic. Appointed commander in chief of the army in Italy, he oversaw numerous victories and organised the Treaty of Campo Formio with Austria. In 1799 he organised a coup d'état, seized control and proclaimed himself the emperor of France.

1777-98

WHO WAS HORATIO NELSON?

By the time he was commanding the British forces at Trafalgar, Nelson had already established himself as a top naval commander. In 1777 he had become a lieutenant and had fought in the American Revolutionary wars. After an unsuccessful stint commanding a frigate and enforcing the Navigation Act against American ships he was without another appointment for five years, when he then fought the

Revolutionary French in the Mediterranean. His victory at the Battle of Cape St Vincent in 1797 won Nelson a knighthood and a promotion to rear admiral. Another victory, at the Battle of the Nile, saw Nelson all but annihilate the French forces.

1805-6

VILLENEUVE'S CAPTURE AND DEATH

Born into a noble and established family, Pierre-Charles Villeneuve received rapid promotion upon entering the French Navy. It was his flagship, along with one other, which were the only two to escape destruction at the hands of Nelson during the Battle of the Nile. Following defeat at Trafalgar, Villeneuve was captured but released shortly after, whereupon he returned to France in disgrace. Shortly after arriving and aware that Napoleon would be severely displeased with the defeat at Trafalgar, Villeneuve committed suicide. Stabbing himself six times in the chest, this caused some to speculate he'd in fact been murdered.



ABOVE An artist's impression of the scene aboard the French ship Algésiras during the battle

annihilation. The strongest navy was the combined fleet with about 33 ships, as opposed to the Royal Navy's 27, but the quality of the command and the quality of support was far different.

What were some of the immediate results of the battle?

It ended Napoleon's hopes of contesting the seas. It meant that he didn't have the capacity to be really disruptive in trying to attack the British colonies, either in the West Indies or in the East Indies. It didn't save Britain from the threat of invasion but it did ensure the security of British maritime communications and also secured British access to markets in the Mediterranean. Despite Napoleon's actions, most of Europe still wanted British goods. Due to their victory the British were able to import goods into Europe from the Mediterranean and the Baltic. However it did not have the dramatic impact of saving Britain from invasion, which I think is the crucial thing. The 19th and 20th century British narrative is that all that stood between Britain and the Napoleonic invasion was Nelson and a few ships, which simply wasn't the case.

Are there any instances where the combined fleet could have won?

Put simply, no. The French and Spanish performed a single line and Nelson had split his own line into two. Recently, during the Bicentenary, the battle was modelled on a computer and it was

quite clear that what Nelson did as he approached the French and Spanish was to move as if he was going to attack further to the front of the French line. This caused Villeneuve to push his own line further out, so they couldn't support the two parts of the line which were cut. It was a pretty one-sided event. I can't see where during the battle that Villeneuve could have actually won.

What if the British government had not concluded the treaty of the Third Coalition with Austria in August 1805? Might that have meant Napoleon's Grand Armée was still on the Channel coast by the time a critical battle at sea occurred?

What strikes me about this whole affair was the importance of Britain negotiating the Third Coalition in getting Sweden and Russia on board, and by August involving Austria too. Once that happened Napoleon gave up any idea of invading Britain. He had to move his army to the east in order to confront the Austrians. If that hadn't happened, then the army would still have been on the Channel coast. Whether, despite that defeat, Napoleon would have tried to find other means is an interesting question. Again, though, highly difficult because you only have small ships to cross the channel in. He needed a long period of good weather and he needed to keep his communications open for probably six weeks. If the British hadn't concluded that treaty then it's possible that the

French might have found some kind of way to get across the Channel but it would have been a very small chance.

What if Villeneuve had been more aggressive in his approach to the Battle of Trafalgar?

This is a great point for French historians. Before Villeneuve was put in command there was an admiral called La Touche-Tréville and he had previously beaten Nelson. He was a different kettle of fish to Villeneuve, and he would also have stood up to Napoleon when he was making impossible demands. It's likely he would have also worked better with the Spanish as well, because the Spanish fleet was in relatively good condition and its officers were extremely good. Essentially you would have a far better naval commander, far stronger in terms of his relationships with his Spanish collaborators, and someone who would've stood up to Napoleon. That's one of the great questions surrounding the battle: what if someone who had fought Nelson and beaten him had been in command? The whole campaign would have been very different.

Could it have led to an invasion of England? Were there plans in place?

There was a whole series of plans, dating right back to revolutionary times, and Napoleon had a number of his own. But could a victory for him at Trafalgar have led to an invasion? It would have been extremely unlikely. Even if Britain had been defeated, the French and Spanish would've had to go on fighting their way up the Channel, defeating equally large forces with a reducing number of ships. I think I'm right in saying that Napoleon

had estimated that he needed about 138,000 troops to capture London, and he only ever had the capacity to land 90,000. It's unlikely that one defeat of the British off the coast of southern Spain would have led to an invasion, but there were plans.

If Napoleon had won, what could some of the immediate consequences have been?

It would have put more pressure upon the British expedition to Southern Italy. Prior to the Battle of Trafalgar the British had sent a force to the Kingdom of Naples, with Russian support. As it happened, British attempts to stop the French invasion in Naples failed anyway, but it would have made it much more complicated.

Could a French victory at Trafalgar have had a wider historical impact?

If it had been a victory it would have put the seal on Napoleon's reputation as a strategic genius. If the Royal Navy had been thrown out of its position we would have a different view of Napoleon. In France, Napoleon's reputation as a land commander is almost second to none, but to me it was his ineptitude in many ways of understanding the sea that let him down. I think we would also have a different world in some respects because Britain would have become part of the Napoleonic empire, even if it were through giving up its colonial possessions. The British had taken numerous French colonies and it's likely that the French would have insisted that they took those back. So it was a big ask for a victory to take place, but it would have had a massive historical impact.

BELOW

The death of Nelson, who became immortalised as a British hero



THE POSSIBILITY

1805

INVASION?

While Napoleon was in exile on St Helena towards the end of his life, he noted to his doctor, Barry O'Meara, that: "It was my firm intention to invade England and to head the expedition myself." Napoleon then outlined his plan of drawing off the Royal Navy, then sail up the Channel and land an army that would march on and seize the capital. O'Meara described how the two became involved in a debate as to the viability of such a plan and whether the British population would not have resisted and taken to the streets to defend the city. However, interestingly, Napoleon claimed that during the proposed march on London he would have exercised the most extreme discipline towards his troops and that he would have come to Britain as a 'friend' of the people. He said: "Marauding or otherwise injuring or insulting the inhabitants would have been punished with instant death."

1803

LA TOUCHE-TRÉVILLE

In 1803, Admiral Louis-René de La Touche-Tréville had successfully managed to hold back the forces of Nelson while at Boulogne. In 1804, while off Toulon, La Touche-Tréville intercepted Nelson as he was on the way to capture two French vessels. Nelson turned back, followed by La Touche-Tréville, who then used the event to publicly humiliate the British admiral. For Nelson's part, this began a bitter rivalry and he insulted his adversary numerous times. For La Touche-Tréville, he spoke of a desire to "have another confrontation with his colleague, Nelson". La Touche-Tréville died in 1804 but had he lived to see Trafalgar it may have been he, and not Villeneuve, who commanded the French/Spanish forces. If so, it would have been the final titanic duel between two rivals.

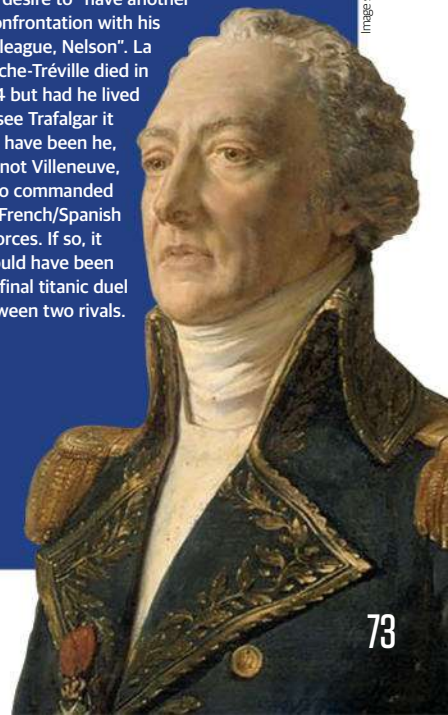


Image source: wiki / Palace of Versailles

What if...

THE CHARTISTS HAD SUCCEEDED?

Winning the vote, and a voice, for the working man would change the political and social structure of Britain forever

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Vic Clarke

Vic was a lecturer in History at the University of Durham. Her chapter on Victorian Britain in the *Routledge Companion to Working-Class Literature* was published in late 2023.

© Vic Clarke

Working people had gathered enormous momentum by the early part of the 19th century. Cities and towns with their factories and mills devoured the landscape, with a huge volume of labour needed to power the vast and greedy British industrial engine. But with it came frustration at the continued lack of recognition for the vital role of the ordinary working population. No longer willing to be treated as disposable fuel to generate wealth for their bosses, they decided to make their voice heard, with a dream of an equal say in politics, turning a rotten and cruelly unequal society on its head. This took the form of a People's Charter calling for six major electoral reforms.

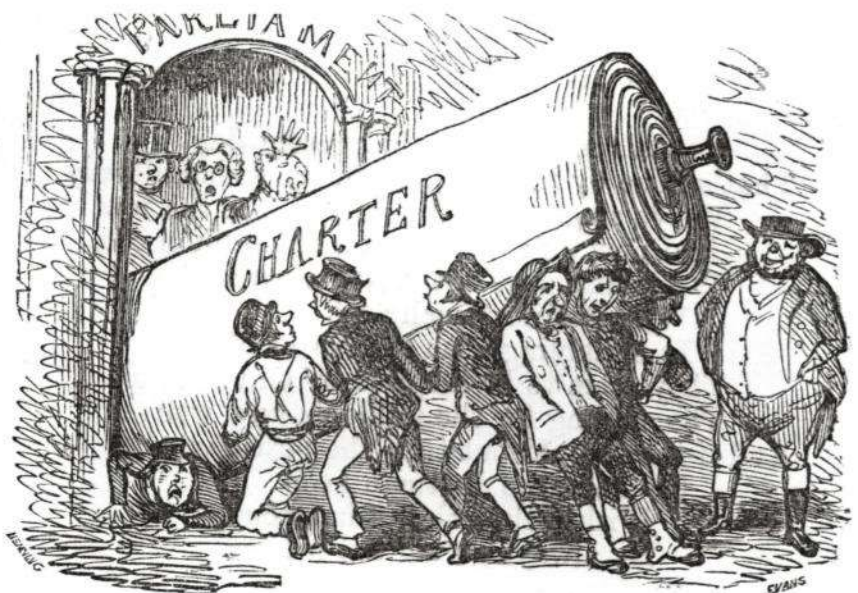
What would the social, political and economic landscape have looked like if the Chartists had succeeded?

The landscape would have been reshaped significantly. The movement was focused on class above all else, and the notion of labour as property and right to political citizenship. The workhouse system created through the New Poor Law (1834) was a real fear of many working-class labourers who were affected by mechanisation of factories, which pushed them out of work or significantly reduced their wages. It's likely that the 'bastilles' of the workhouse system would have been abolished had the Chartists not only succeeded in getting the vote for working-class people but been able to afford to stand as MPs themselves. While Feargus O'Connor, a radical member of the Irish gentry and leader of the movement, was successful in the Nottingham election of

1847, as just one MP he had little influence in parliament, and so his constituents in the framework knitting, lace-making and mining industries were still plagued by the same issues they had been before. It's also possible that the Tory MPs would have had to significantly change tactics to appeal to this new rise of working-class voters, as they did following the 1867 Reform Act which resulted in a landslide election victory over the Liberals, in part through their appeals to promote working-class football clubs and maintain pub opening hours.

Were the Chartist leaders in danger of just creating another layer of literate elite to control and utilise the votes of the mainly illiterate masses?
The Chartist leaders aimed to improve

literacy and education, to ensure not only that working people *could* vote, but could vote in their best interests. The Charter was itself a literary document, and literary culture was huge for the movement, with a flourishing publishing culture. Until the end of the 19th century, 'literacy' was defined as the ability to write one's name on the marriage certificate. In practical terms, this meant that many people could read, if not very well, and this is evident when we consider the boom in Chartist periodicals and newspapers from 1837 onwards. Papers such as the Newcastle-based *Northern Liberator*, the Glasgow *Chartist Circular*, and of course, the *Northern Star* had significant readerships, although this did fluctuate. The *Northern Star* became the longest running Chartist paper, spanning 15 years, and for one



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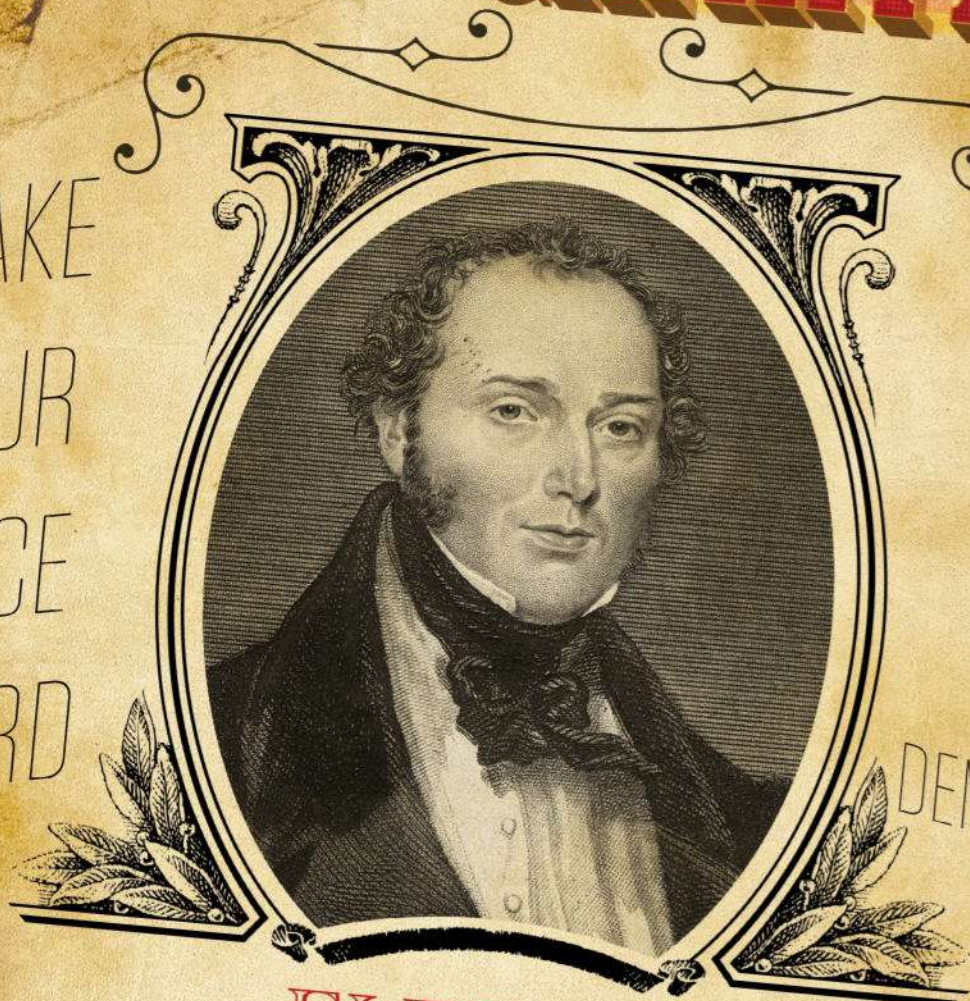
Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT
Parliament rejected countless petitions from the Chartists

What if...
THE CHARTISTS HAD SUCCEEDED?

VOTE CHARTIST

MAKE
YOUR
VOICE
HEARD



CAST
YOUR
BALLOT
FOR
DEMOCRACY

ELECT A
REPRESENTATIVE
FOR THE
WORKING PEOPLE
OF

BRITAIN

THE PAST

1838 – 1839

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Following the failure of the 1832 Reform Act to abolish the need to own property in order to be a Member of Parliament, a small group of MPs joined forces with others such as the London Working Men's Association to put forward their own proposals. The People's Charter stated six specific demands, including the vote for all adult men. In 1839 there was a National Convention of the Chartists and a petition signed by over one million people was delivered to the Government. Parliament voted not to discuss the petition in the Commons and it was dismissed.

1839

GETTING PHYSICAL

Many parts of the country were answering the call of the Chartist movement, and for some the only way to be heard was through physical action, even armed force. The Chartist John Frost led an armed group against the Westgate Hotel in Newport, Wales, only to be repelled by the soldiers billeted there. Many protesters were shot.

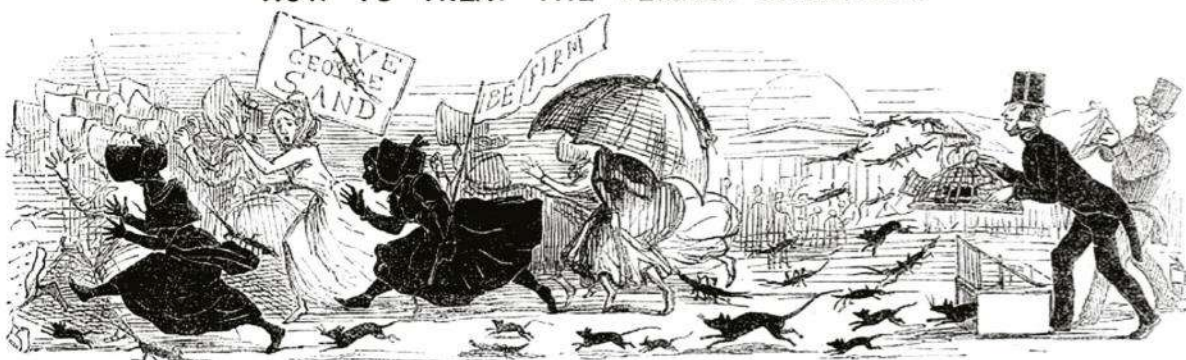
Such uprisings did the Chartist cause substantial damage and the authorities were keen to make examples of such behaviour. Frost and two other leaders were sentenced to transportation while in other similar acts of violence many were imprisoned and even shot in the riots.

1842 – 1848

A LOST CAUSE

In 1842 another petition was put to Parliament – this time containing three million signatures – but it was once again rejected. In response to a drop in wages, workers launched a series of strikes, including workers in mines, factories and mills. For those who attacked the plugs of steam boilers in the factories and mills it was the 'Plug Plot' riots, walking in the footsteps of the Luddites some 30 years before and attacking the very machinery that was the embodiment of how their working lives had changed. By 1848 support had started to wane. Money to support the activists dwindled and the refusal of petitions was demoralising to the cause. Things would stay the same, for now.

HOW TO TREAT THE FEMALE CHARTISTS.



ABOVE Chartists could not avoid being figures of fun in the press

week in 1839 outselling *The Times*!

For those who couldn't read, communal reading practices were established among peers in local communities. It's estimated that for every copy of the *Northern Star* sold, it had an average of seven readers. WE Adams, who eventually became a journalist himself, recalls in his autobiography that his ageing neighbour Larry would come to the Adams family home "every Sunday morning, as regular as clockwork, with a copy of the *Northern Star*, damp from the press, for the purpose of hearing some member of our household read out [loud] to him and others." The secret ballot was another attempt to ensure that the illiterate could vote in private (with a trusted ally), rather than in public at the hustings.

Who would be the main losers and who would truly benefit most from the Chartist success? What was their stance on female suffrage?

Some Chartists, like George Julian Harney, were red-blooded republicans who avidly followed the French and European revolutions in 1848. This wasn't the case for all factions of the movements, but as a correspondent of figures such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, we can speculate that figures such as Harney and others like Bronterre O'Brien and William Cuffay would have been very glad to see members of the aristocracy who didn't have radical sympathies lose much of their assets, and have their generational incomes redistributed to state funds to support food and sanitation reforms. Manual labourers would have benefited the most from the Chartists' proposed aims, and likely would have been able to retire at a reasonable age with a full pension, rather than having to work through illness or depend on their children for financial support.

William Lovett, author of the 'People's Charter' (1838), revealed in his 1873 autobiography that he had originally

intended to expand “a vote for all men aged 21” to include women, but it was generally decided that the demand for women to have the vote would have been seen as too unreasonable, and was left out. RJ Richardson, author of *The Rights of Woman*, argued that married women would be “represented by their husbands”, as a married couple represented one soul under God. He supported some groups who proposed adding a seventh point to the Charter that would expand suffrage to widowed and single women, although it’s worth noting that these regions, notably Birmingham’s Female Political Union, had strong Female Radical Associations.

Women were active in the Chartist movement throughout the period, whether directly addressing meetings as London activists Susanna Inge and Mary Ann Walker did, resulting in their being vilified in the popular press including *Punch*, or by 'radical domesticity' in organising meetings and social functions, educating their children in the home, and campaigning for improvements to their own working conditions. Chartism was a movement based on class, rather than gender, but women in the movement took what we would now call an intersectional approach to pointing out the hypocrisy of middle-class women as domestic managers whose priority had to be their family, rather than working outside the home for financial gain. David Jones notes that some Chartist women appealed to Queen Victoria on this basis, using open letters, petitions, and even a memorial procession to communicate their protests.

How effective was the promotion of their views and the communication between Chartist groups?

Chartists relied on their own newspapers and periodicals to communicate en masse. The 'readers and correspondents' columns of papers like the *Chartist Circular* and *Northern Star* included letters from individuals and families looking to speak

to other people who have established local branches of the National Charter Association in their local areas, or even to ask for donations of books and periodicals to local circulating libraries. Just as social media can connect us with people with the same interests all over the world, newspapers and periodicals enabled activists in the 1840s a very strong network of communication.

To what extent did more radical activists within the movement blur the message and endanger support from potential sympathisers?

Chartism famously had two main factions: 'physical force' and 'moral force' activists. 'Moral force' Chartists, like William Lovett, Francis Place, and John Collins of the London Working Men's Association, argued for peaceful demonstrations that communicated their aims and demands within a framework of middle-class Victorian respectability. They argued for systematic forms of education of children, temperance or abstinence from alcohol, and the use of existing modes of formal, literate protest to demonstrate the working classes' 'moral' right to suffrage. The 'physical force' Chartists weren't bloodthirsty, but rather impatient. Taking inspiration from the American and French Revolutions, 'physical force' advocates like George Julian Harney argued for 'a gun in one hand and a petition in the other', using armed uprisings and mass

strike action to achieve their aims. Notable Chartist 'risings' in this vein include the Newport Rising of 1839, and the Sheffield Rising of 1840. The instigators of these alienated support from middle-class sympathisers and were punished harshly, resulting in the transportation of the Newport leaders to Australia, and imprisonment with hard labour for Samuel Holberry of Sheffield.

In what way can we say that the Chartist movement did have a degree of success rather than total failure?

This is a question I love to set my students! In my view, it's safe to say that even if the Chartist petitions didn't succeed immediately, the movement set a precedent for standards of political citizenship and belonging that were carried forth by subsequent generations. Of the six points of the People's Charter (abolition of property qualification to stand as MP, votes for all men over age 21, payment for MPs, secret ballots, equal electoral districts, and annual parliaments), only one hasn't been enacted. While in recent memory we have seen payment of MPs be exploited, generations later in the 21st century we are benefiting from the legislative changes the Chartists campaigned for. The movement aimed more broadly to better the lives of working-class people through active participation in politics, and improve literacy and working conditions.

BELOW

After a meeting on Kennington Common, the Chartists' third and final petition was presented (and rejected), in 1848



THE POSSIBILITY

1900

LABOUR NOT REQUIRED

Had the Chartists been successful in their endeavours then some 60 years later it may not have been necessary to form the Labour Party. The need for drastic reform of working practices, pay and conditions, and the right of working people to vote and stand for election themselves, as well as trade unions, may well have already been dealt with by the National Charter Association in the middle of the 19th century. The earlier existence of a structured, organised and effective opposition party representing the majority of working people may have had a profound effect on politics and policy both at home and overseas.



1901

A SHRINKING CROWN

The actions of more radical Chartists had rallied many against them. But with the ordinary working people given real representative power in politics and the law, the monarchy would possibly not escape their attention. For many the Crown was the epitome of inequality and the power of property and wealth. And while the abolition of the monarchy may not have been a desirable outcome for most, greater accountability for public money it received and especially the curbing of its spending on lavish events would possibly have become, much earlier, a matter of public interest, scrutiny and debate as is the case today.



1850 ONWARDS

WHERE THE HEART IS

Instead of being exploited in foul, cramped housing conditions that were death traps of disease for all, there may possibly have been a more regulated system of rented housing for workers, with fair payment and healthy conditions in which workers could thrive. With the power of the ballot box, the working class would attract greater interest from MPs to champion their cause and push for ever more reform to improve the lives of their constituents. And with such a focus on properly regulated rented accommodation, the balance of home ownership today might have possibly been very different.



What if...

QUEEN VICTORIA HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED?

A lone gunman could have plunged Britain into an age of autocracy but kept Hanover out of the Austro-Prussian War

INTERVIEW WITH



Catherine Curzon

Catherine Curzon is a royal historian specialising in the 18th century. Her work has featured in numerous publications and she has spoken at venues including the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, and Dr Johnson's house. She is the author of *Life in the Georgian Court and Kings of Georgian Britain*.

What did happen when Edward Oxford tried to shoot Queen Victoria?

Victoria was 21 years old and pregnant with her first child when Edward Oxford made his attempt on her life on 10 June 1840. As was her habit, the queen and Prince Albert were riding in a carriage on Constitution Hill, and Oxford, who was just 18, took two pistols and waited for his chance. When the queen came within striking distance, he fired. Luckily, he missed with both bullets. Victoria and Albert were unharmed while Oxford was incarcerated in Bedlam and Broadmoor before starting a new life in Australia. Queen Victoria, meanwhile, went on to become a legendary figure among the monarchies of the world. Of course, if one of those bullets had found its mark, history would have been very different indeed.

What would her death have meant for Europe?

It's not unfeasible that the continent would have been changed forever. The violent termination of Victoria's line before she had any children would have had a massive impact on the continental royal families and one of the most significant must surely be that, had Victoria, later Princess Royal, died in the womb when her mother was assassinated, the German Empire would have looked very different indeed. After all, she was mother to Wilhelm II, the emperor who steered his country into World War I.

Who would have succeeded her?

The next in line to the throne was King George III's son, Ernest Augustus, king of Hanover. Ernest was massively unpopular in Britain and had been for decades, largely thanks to gossip that implicated him in

murder, suicide, electioneering fraud and several sex scandals, including numerous homosexual affairs with members of his household.

These rumours were unfounded and their root could be found in his political opinions. He voted against the Reform Act, opposed Catholic emancipation and even attempted to install a government to replace Wellington's own when he learned that the Iron Duke intended to seek a reconciliation with Irish Catholics. A hard-line Tory who sported a disfiguring facial scar, Ernest was a convenient bogeyman for the British public, and it was a mantle he never truly shed.

Was there any chance that Parliament would have amended the line of succession to avoid Ernest Augustus?

No. Regardless of his popularity, any move to pass over Ernest Augustus in favour of another would have been constitutionally virtually impossible, let alone hugely unwise at a time when the nation was reeling. If they had pressed ahead anyway, the most obvious candidate was Ernest Augustus' brother, Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge. He'd shown no interest in becoming king of anywhere and held no ambitions to rule in Britain.

Despite the enduring public image of Victoria and Albert, there was absolutely no precedent that could have seen the late queen's young husband become king. Less than six months into his marriage, he held no claim to the British crown whatsoever and to appoint him, or even attempt to, would have been a massive misstep by Parliament at a time when they needed unity above all else.

With Ernest Augustus so unpopular, what would have been the impact of his succession?

Ernest Augustus had ruled in Hanover since 1837 and he had made his mark immediately upon arriving in his new realm. He dissolved parliament, suspended the disputed Hanoverian constitution and ordered that all holders of public office must swear an allegiance to the crown under threat of expulsion. Though his moves did bring a shifting and conflicted political system into line, things would barely have been settled in 1840, when he would be called to Britain to take his place on the throne, renewing the personal union between Hanover and Britain under his rule.

Though it's easy to throw around talk of revolution in any alternate timeline, history suggests that in the case of Ernest Augustus taking the throne as king of Britain, we might have had rather more public sabre rattling than true action. In fact, the nation as a whole would likely have welcomed its new monarch, gripped by patriotism in light of the tragic assassination of its queen.

Would Ernest Augustus have retained popularity in the longer term?

With the new king as hard-line as ever, the honeymoon period would not have lasted. He was likely to prove a dominating monarch, used to the absolutism of Hanover, and he had always held strong views on Ireland. When the Irish potato famine struck, Ernest Augustus would have seen his opportunity to hit the country hard and would have personally intervened to prevent the repeal of the Corn Laws. In

What if...

QUEEN VICTORIA HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED?

"If one of those bullets
had found its mark, history
would have been very
different indeed"



What if... QUEEN VICTORIA HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED?



ABOVE
The young Queen Victoria, painted in 1843 by Winterhalter

"At the first faint stirrings of discord in Britain, Ernest Augustus might order troops out onto the streets"

as the king's patsy, used to remove the obstacle of the young queen and rushed to the gallows to silence him.

In 1848, revolutions echo through Europe. At the first stirrings of discord in Britain, Ernest Augustus might order troops out onto the streets. Any agitators could expect to be met with swift punishment, and the fledgling British revolution would be crushed before it even begins.

However, with Ernest Augustus no longer present in Hanover, he might have taken his eye off the ball just long enough for revolutionary fever to take hold of his continental kingdom. He would turn to Prussia to stamp out the uprising in Hanover and see it was swiftly terminated. In Britain, however, this move would only make the king less popular as the man who opened the door to the Prussians.

Would Ernest Augustus have attempted any reforms in Britain?

As king, he might have been an autocrat but he wasn't a fool. He was well aware that the people could be won by more peaceful methods. Rather than sweeping reform, he would most likely attempt to stamp his influence on the country through its landscape and culture, a tried and tested approach.

Just as he did in Hanover, he would maybe plough funding into the arts, as well as the transport infrastructure, laying the

foundations for a rail network that would eventually criss-cross the entire country.

With the careful stewardship of Lord Bentinck, the sovereign would continue his Hanoverian policy of allowing all social classes to hold ministerial office. In practice, this promising development might prove to be little more than lip service thanks to the machinations of the ultra-Tory government that would provide the backbone of the monarch's support. Of course, Catholics would be barred from holding any office regardless of class or party.

When Ernest Augustus dies in 1851, what would become of his territories?

Ernest Augustus' two crowns would be inherited by his son, George V of Hanover and Britain. Like his father, George was a believer in absolutism. Aware that many considered him an unsuitable candidate for monarch since he was totally blind, he became determined to make himself known as a hard and uncompromising king and to make his mark on the land.

If his father ascended to the British throne thanks to Oxford's assassination of Queen Victoria, George V would have been 21 years old when he became heir to the throne. The young crown prince had neither bride nor heir, placing the long-term succession in doubt. With a quick marriage now a matter of urgency, the easiest candidate for the role would

How would it be different?

Real timeline



● **Assassination attempt**
Edward Oxford fires two pistols at Queen Victoria while she is riding in an open-top carriage.
10 June 1840

Alternate timeline

● **The bullets miss**
Victoria is unharmed and Oxford is seized by onlookers. Oxford makes no attempt to hide his actions, declaring: "It was I, it was me that did it."
10 June 1840

● **Oxford committed**
Due to his severe mental illness, Oxford is acquitted by reason of insanity. Committed to Bedlam, he proves to be a model patient.
10 July 1840

● **Assassin executed**
Oxford is found guilty of treason. On the day of Ernest Augustus' arrival in England, he witnesses Oxford's execution by hanging.
10 July 1840

● **Long live the king**
Oxford hits his target and the 21-year-old queen dies. In the absence of a living heir, Ernest Augustus of Hanover succeeds her.
10 June 1840



have been Princess Augusta of Cambridge. As daughter of Prince Adolphus, she was George's cousin, and they would be expected to set to work on producing the much-needed heir and a spare.

Far from a progressive monarch, in a changing Europe George would have been seen as a dinosaur, embodying a royal despotism that was swiftly becoming a thing of the past. From his home in England he might attempt to rule both his territories but the reins of power would never be held firmly, and when the Austro-Prussian War broke out, it would prove a fateful conflict for King George V.

Would George V have brought Britain into the Austro-Prussian War, or would British influence have kept Hanover from becoming involved?

Since George theoretically now rules Hanover and Britain, plunging into the war of 1866 would be easier said than done. The 1701 Act of Settlement included a provision stating, "This nation be not obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominions or territories which do not belong to the Crown of England, without the consent of Parliament".

George V, however, was a man who passionately believed in the absolutism of the monarch, and in Hanover it was a power he enjoyed. In Britain, he would find things to be considerably more difficult.

Reminded of Prussia's part in putting down the Hanoverian revolution of 1848, George would appeal for Britain to enter the conflict on their side. Parliament was unequivocal, however: Britain must remain neutral. With any efforts to dissolve Parliament and force British involvement

in the war proving fruitless, George V would be faced with a difficult choice. Constitutionally, the personal union of Hanover and Britain was now causing serious headaches for all concerned. After all, how could a monarch be at war in one realm and neutral in another? The answer, of course, was that he could not.

Understandably, it's unlikely that George V would have been willing to abdicate the powerful British throne in favour of the Hanoverian one. Having said that, he probably wouldn't have been willing to give Hanover, which his family had ruled for centuries, to Prussia either. Instead, Hanover's best path would have been to follow Britain into a declaration of neutrality during the Austro-Prussian War. This would have carried the implicit understanding that any belligerent who chose to bloody Hanover's nose might somewhere along the line invite problems with the great superpower of Britain.

Though Prussia was victorious in the short, brutal war, Hanover would likely be left mostly unscathed apart from some small-scale conflicts between citizens who were loyal to one side or the other. At the close of hostilities, George V would have learned an important lesson from Parliament and it's unlikely that he would attempt to force his will on it again.

What would have been the longer-term fate of Britain?

The line of George V would naturally continue to his heir, George VI. Mindful of his father's own troubles as a dual head of state, the new king might have been expected to learn from the problems his predecessor faced and immediately



ABOVE

After years in Broadmoor, failed assassin Edward Oxford began a new life in Australia

make enquiries about splitting the line of succession between the British and Hanoverian crowns. Ultimately, he would likely choose to abdicate his crown in Hanover – certainly the lesser of the two territories – in favour of his brother, thus keeping control of Britain and continuing the growth of its territories and allegiances. As the years passed, the successors of Ernest Augustus would settle into the role of constitutional monarchs, presiding over a British Empire that spanned the globe.

● **Victoria's daughter born**
Victoria, later Princess Royal, the baby that Victoria was carrying at the time of the attempt on her life, is born healthy at Buckingham Palace.
21 November 1840

● **George V deposed**
A triumphant Prussia annexes Hanover. To the end of his days, George V refuses to acknowledge his deposition.
20 September 1866

● **Queen Victoria dies**
After a monumental six decades on the throne, the legendary Queen Victoria dies at the age of 81.
22 January 1901

● **Succession of Edward VII**
Edward VII ascends to the throne. His poor relationship with his nephew, Wilhelm II, causes tension between the two nations.
22 January 1901

● **Austro-Prussian War**
When war breaks out, on the continent, Hanover allies with Austria against Prussia. Ultimately, Prussia claims the victory.
1866

● **George V marries**
George V and Princess Augusta of Cambridge are married. Their job is simple: secure the line of succession.
1 December 1840

● **Lord Bentinck appointed**
Facing constant intervention from the anti-Irish king, Peel stands down. He is replaced by Lord George Bentinck.
1 December 1846

● **Ernest Augustus dies**
The hardline King Ernest Augustus dies. He is succeeded in both Britain and Hanover by his son, George V.
18 November 1851

● **Austro-Prussian War**
George V cannot convince Britain to enter the war and, faced with possible abdication, elects instead to declare Hanover neutral, too.
12 June - 23 August 1866

● **George V dies**
George V's successor accepts the separation of government and crown in Britain and the conflict in ruling two such very different kingdoms.
12 June 1878



● **Line of succession split**
George VI abdicates the throne of Hanover in favour of his brother and instates constitutional change, splitting the personal union forever.
1 January 1879

What if...

THE WHIGS INTERVENED IN THE GREAT FAMINE OF IRELAND?

Better intervention in the Great Famine would have changed both Ireland and America as we know them

INTERVIEW WITH



Judy Bolger

Judy Bolger is a PhD candidate at Trinity College, Dublin, where her doctoral work investigates Irish women's experiences of poverty and motherhood in the workhouse. Judy has published works on mothers and the workhouse and is the Book Review Editor for the Women's History Association of Ireland.

In 1845, the fungus *phytophthora infestans* hit Ireland. This particular fungus invades the potato plant and causes the complete decay of the crop. At the time, around half of the Irish population depended on the potato as a major part of their diet. By late 1845, a huge proportion of the country's potato crop had been decimated, and the situation worsened over the next two years. This led to the famine known as the Great Hunger, which killed over 1 million people and forced 2 million more to flee Ireland's shores, often in squalid conditions that caused even more deaths at sea. The British government, led by the Whigs, did not intervene, allowing the disease to ravage Ireland.

Why did the Whigs not intervene in the famine?

The Whigs didn't intervene effectively in the Irish famine for several reasons. These included their Malthusian ideological belief regarding poverty, the desire to prioritise free markets over government intervention, and a moral indifference to Irish suffering.

The Whig government's approach to the economy was largely influenced by the work of British economist Thomas Malthus, whose economic theory was based on the belief that poverty and famine were inevitable consequences of unchecked population growth. He argued that the government ought not interfere with matters relating to poverty as any relief given may prevent a natural solution to the problem. As such, poor relief or support in times of dire circumstances was quite limited under

this government. It was believed that providing too much support for the poor would promote idleness and pauperism. Malthus' approach to poverty reflected the broader principles of laissez-faire economics – a doctrine that advocates minimal government intervention.

This apprehension to intervene reflected more than just the economic philosophy of the Whigs' government, it was also tied to a moral and religious sense of superiority that many in the government and wider British society felt over the Irish. The prevailing view amongst some British politicians was that the Irish were somehow responsible for their own suffering. Anti-Irish sentiment, based on racial and ethnic stereotypes, meant many in the government and wider English society saw the Irish as inferior and their suffering as inevitable.

In what ways could the Whigs have provided aid to the Irish?

In early-19th-century Ireland, poverty was widespread, severe and generational. More than one-third of families lived in one-room mud cabins. Poor families were often completely dependent on their own potato produce to survive. Power and wealth had long been held by a small landholding elite, in contrast to the 3 million landless labourers and cottiers who lived on subsistence.

The arrival of the potato blight in 1845, therefore, was deeply worrying. Robert Peel's Tory government responded by introducing a series of relief measures including the importation of Indian corn, the setting up of hundreds of relief committees and the establishment of

public works where people could earn money to buy food. These measures, as well as the blight not being as deadly as previously forecasted, meant hunger and starvation at famine level was staved off.

Unfortunately, when the blight returned the following year, 1846, it was more deadly and John Russell's Whigs' response to it was less interventionist than Peel's. Russell began to roll out relief in the form of public work. Under the scheme, 700,000 men, women and children were put to work. The elderly and children as young as ten years old worked together in very weak and malnourished conditions. The scheme was neither appropriate nor administered properly, and was considered a failure by many, with the press keen to ridicule it.

Instead of this scheme, the Whigs could have provided better aid to the Irish, in

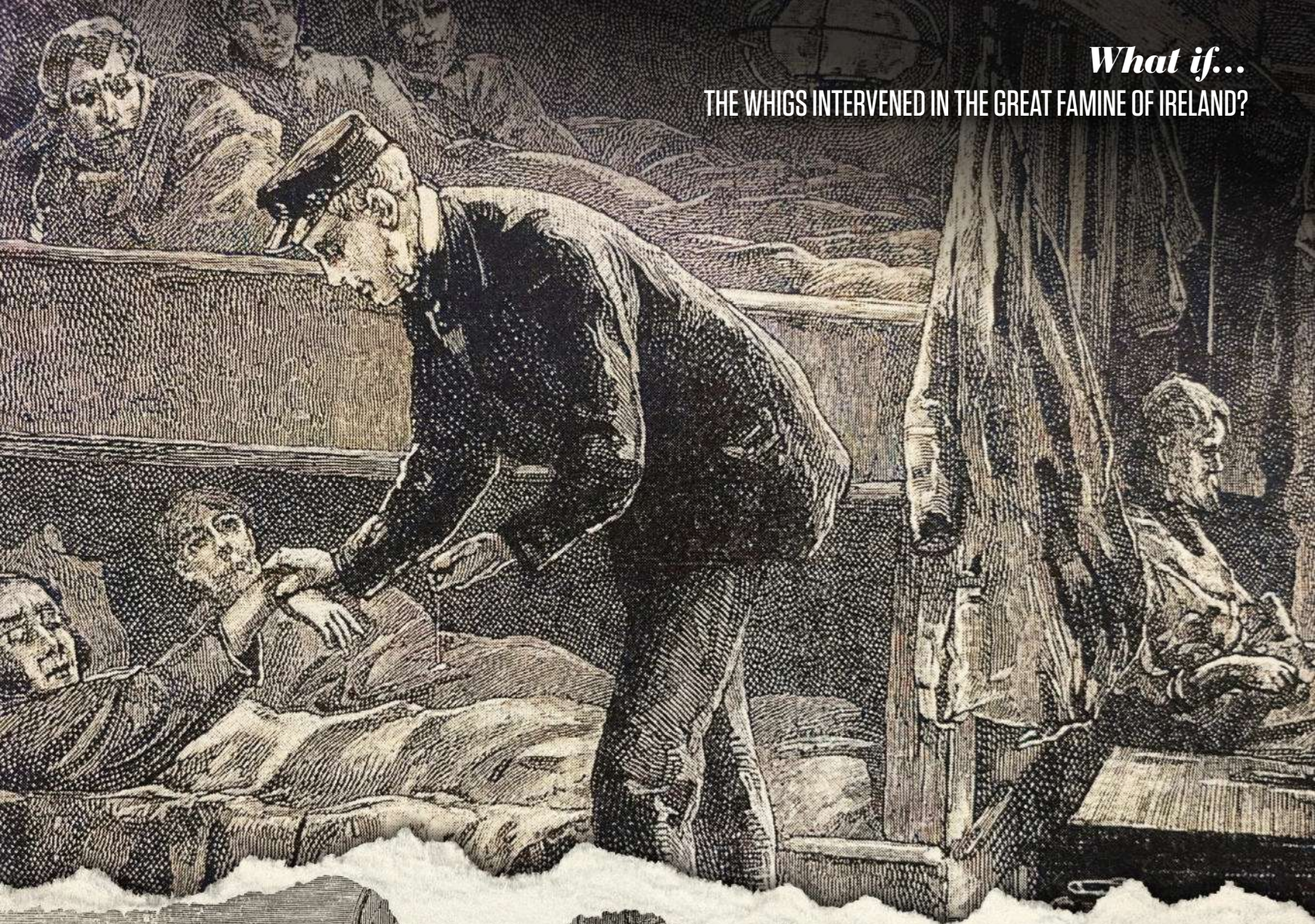


RIGHT

Lord Russell's Whigs followed a low-intervention economic policy

Main image source: © Alamy

What if...
THE WHIGS INTERVENED IN THE GREAT FAMINE OF IRELAND?



THE PAST

1845-47

EXPORTING FOOD TO BRITAIN

Despite the difficulties in the country, during the famine years Ireland continued to export a huge amount of food, particularly grains, to Britain. Up to 75% of the country's soil was dedicated to growing crops such as oats, barley and wheat that were grown to be sold abroad rather than consumed by the Irish people. Some of Ireland's most famine-stricken places, such as Ballyshannon, Limerick and Sligo, were major exporters of various foodstuffs, also including peas, onions, butter and even salmon.



1845-55

MAKING AMERICA IRISH

Around two million Irish people fled Ireland as a result of the catastrophic effects of the Great Hunger, with many heading for the more abundant lands of America. The Irish diaspora was hugely influential in the development of the US, with around 31.5 million Americans, that's roughly 9.5% of the entire population, claiming Irish ancestry today. The impact of Ireland's culture, music, arts and literature is still seen in some of the country's greatest artistic achievements, and even the country's infrastructure was largely aided by the work of immigrant Irish people.



1845-PRESENT

LOSING THEIR LANGUAGE

One of the effects of the combination of death and emigration was the weakening of Irish culture and language. Although today Irish is having a resurgence, with greater interest in the language seeing more Irish people learning and speaking it, for generations it was not spoken widely, and traditional Irish culture was diluted in America and in Ireland by the poverty and hardship that the famine created.



ABOVE
One of Peel's interventions was the import of Indian corn to Ireland

the form of outdoor relief via the poor laws, which were already implemented in England. Considering that it was already enshrined in the English system, the failure of the Whigs' government to expand it to Ireland was a flaw in their approach to the crisis. In Ireland, the 1838 poor laws introduced a system of relief via the 150 workhouses across the country, but access to relief was only available if the individual submitted themselves to the institution.

Outdoor relief was eventually introduced due to the increasing pressures of the Great Famine in 1847 to the aged, sick, infirm, and widows with two or more legitimate children. Had this been introduced earlier, it may have been provided better support than the public work schemes. It is estimated that a quarter of a million people died in the workhouse between 1846 and 1851, of which 80% were directly related to famine-induced conditions.

Would intervention have been able to stop the Hunger completely or only mitigate the outcomes?

The Whigs could have mitigated the worst outcomes of the famine, including mass starvation, disease, and emigration. However, given the scale of the disaster, the underlying social and economic vulnerabilities, and the limitations of 19th-century medical and agricultural knowledge, it is unlikely that any intervention could have fully prevented the famine's devastating impact. A potential intervention that may have lessened the outcome would have been reforming tenancy laws to provide tenants with greater security of tenure, reducing the pressure on farmers. Over 500,000 people were evicted during the Famine years. The Whigs could have reformed the Irish land system which had largely

worked under an absentee landlord system. This would have given the poor more opportunities and addressed the root cause of poverty.

Whilst the government philosophy of the time was centred upon less-intervention, some of the policies they eventually implemented worked and may have been even more beneficial if they continued. For example, the Soup Kitchen Act introduced in March 1847 established 1,800 soup kitchens and fed over 3 million people, but it only ran until September. This marked the last direct intervention from the Whigs as the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1847 shifted financial responsibility for poor relief from the central government to the local poor law unions that had been established in the 1830s. Effectively, each local union had to pay for the relief of its poor from the local rates. This meant poor relief was contingent on locality and very meagre, especially in already very poor unions, particularly in the West. Whilst the potato blight was a natural disaster, England was the richest, most powerful empire in the world. It had the power and money to intervene, but did not, for reasons that were economical, religious, political and moral.

Without the emigration caused by the Hunger, would we still have such a global Irish influence?

It's unlikely the global Irish influence, particularly in the US, would be as strong as it is today. The Famine acted as a catalyst for the mass migration [to the US] of over 800,000 Irish in the 1850s, which significantly shaped the Irish diaspora. The influx of Irish immigrants to the US played a crucial role in building American infrastructure, influencing politics, and contributing to society, including Irish-Americans' pivotal role in the Civil War. Their descendants, connected to their Irish heritage, formed a strong Irish-American identity that continues to impact American culture and politics today. Additionally, famine migrants sent money back home, aiding the Irish independence movement in the decades after the Great Hunger. Without the Famine, the scale of migration would have been much smaller, and the Irish-American influence in the US would likely have been far less pronounced.

How might the Whigs' intervention have changed the relationship between Britain and Ireland?

It might have fostered a more positive relationship between Britain and Ireland.

The trauma of loss from death and emigration during the Famine impacted Irish society, creating a lasting sense of resentment, in some quarters, towards British rule. Had the Whigs provided more timely and adequate aid, it could have mitigated some of this trauma and potentially reduced the animosity that fueled the nationalist movement in the decades following. The Famine also strengthened the Catholic Church, which became a central force in Irish society, offering support to the survivors and contributing to the growing nationalist sentiment.

What effect would a partial ban on Irish exports have had on the famine?

By halting the export of food such as grain, Ireland's domestic supply would have been more accessible to the population, potentially reducing starvation and malnutrition and therefore preventing deaths. But this was a complex issue. At the time, much of Ireland's food was being exported to Britain, even as famine ravaged the country. A partial ban could have ensured that more resources were locally available, even as a temporary relief to the potato blight. However, this measure could have disrupted the broader economy, particularly the export trade, and might

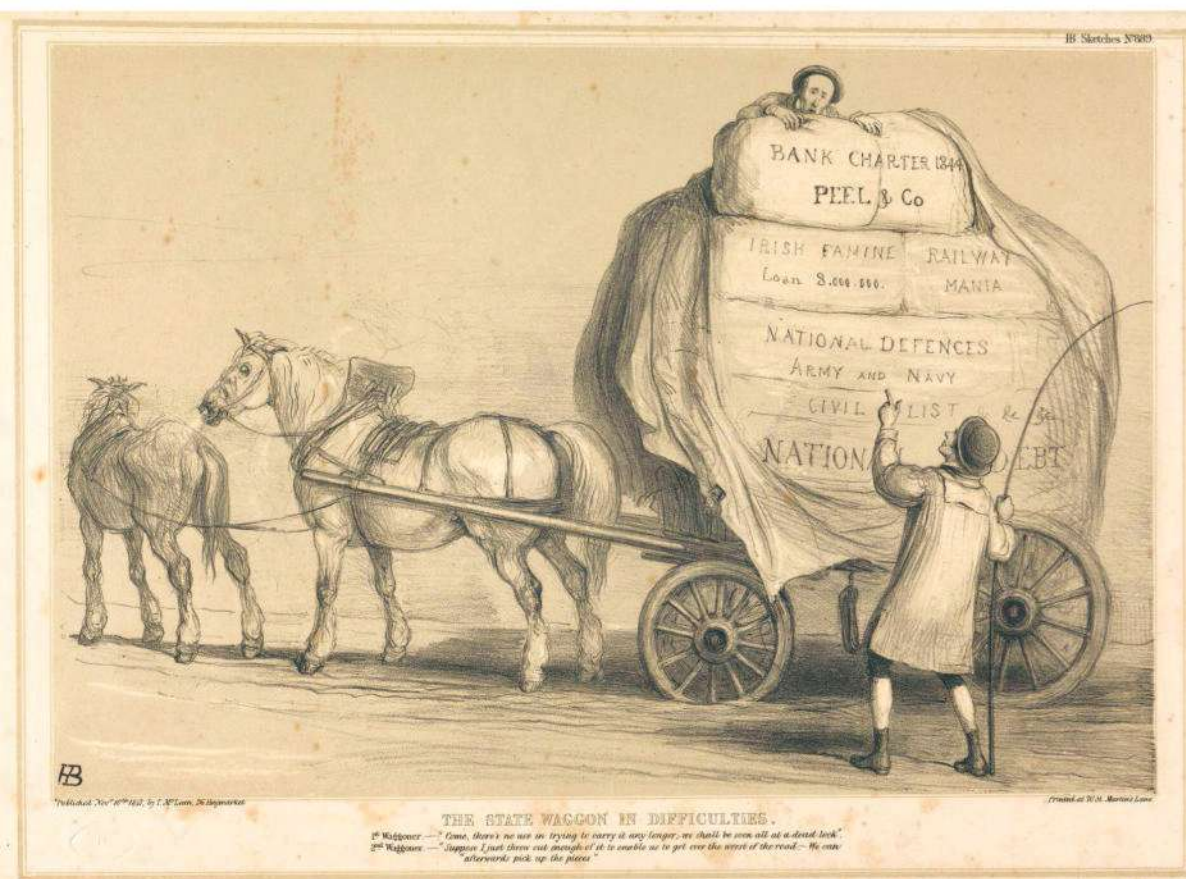
not have been sufficient on its own to fully address the scale of the crisis. Ultimately, it would have provided some relief, but without more comprehensive intervention, it would have been a limited solution. Disastrous economic policies, more generally, starved Ireland, but a ban on the export of Irish grain would not have solved the entire crisis.

How would intervention have affected the intangible aspects of Ireland?

It could have lessened the devastating long-term impacts on Ireland's language and culture. The population, which had reached 8.2 million - making Ireland the second-largest population in the United Kingdom after England - never fully recovered from the famine. More than half of those who died were children, with around 472,000 of the estimated one million deaths being under the age of 10. The loss of this generation undoubtedly contributed to the erosion of Irish culture and the Gaelic language, as the link between poverty and language decline became more entrenched. Had the population been preserved, Ireland's cultural and linguistic heritage might have been better maintained, as the connection between survival and the preservation of traditions would have been stronger.

BELOW

Political cartoonists often mocked the British politicians' response to the Great Famine



THE POSSIBILITY

1846-7

KEEPING FOOD IN IRELAND

Lord Russell's Whigs could have imposed a full or partial ban on exports to Britain to prevent so much of Ireland's non-potato crop from being taken out of the country. The extra food in Ireland could have been given to some of the worst affected people and prevented their deaths by starvation.

Although it would not have solved the crisis, the temporary reprieve brought about by the retention of some extra sustenance may have saved hundreds or thousands of lives.



1845-55

AMERICA WITHOUT THE IRISH

If the Whigs had been able to lessen the damage done by the Great Hunger, far fewer people would have emigrated to America, and the entire makeup of the country today would look different. Not only would there not be the same cultural impact, but the Catholic church would not have developed the same presence as it has done, nor would the country's infrastructure or political landscape be the same. Ireland, too, would be different. On one hand, the talents of those who emigrated have been employed at home, but it may have suffered without the money that generations of Irish Americans sent back to their families in the Emerald Isle.



1845 ONWARDS

FAMILY TIES

Without the devastating effects of the famine, Irish people would have retained more of their culture and language. Without expending all energy on simply surviving in near-impossible conditions, the people of Ireland would have been able to engage more in the continuation of old customs and traditions, not lose their family members to countries far from home, and retain their language. Many of those who died as a result of the famine were children and young people, who would have otherwise carried on their parents' traditions.

Instead, poverty saw language and other intangible parts of culture eroded and lost to time.



What if...

ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES HAD BEEN BANNED?

How excluding one book could have created a devastating hole in human understanding of ourselves

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr P John D Lambshead

John is a retired science research leader at the Natural History Museum, London in marine biodiversity, ecology and evolution, and regent's lecturer at the University of California. His book, *The Fall of Roman Britain and Why We Speak English*, is available now.

© Dr P John D Lambshead

The publication of Charles Darwin's pinnacle work was to ignite a fire of fierce debate about the origins of the natural world, and even of mankind itself. The future of both scientific thought and deeply rooted religious beliefs hung in the balance, as rival theories and the traditionally unquestioned acceptance of how the natural world came to be was turned on its head. The debate over *On the Origin of Species* challenged fellow scientists, and even questioned God's creation. The views and beliefs of the winning side would shape the future of all living things forever.

How explosive was the publication of *On the Origin of Species* at the time?

The concept of evolution as a historical event was a hot topic among biologists and geologists prior to Darwin's book because there was so much evidence accumulating, but I suspect biological evolution hadn't really impinged on people outside of the academic bunker. As long as science knew of no mechanism to explain how evolution happened, it could be safely dismissed as a crank idea – a kind of 19th-century equivalent of alien abductions and Nazi moon bases.

Even Darwin and Wallace's 1858 scientific paper demonstrating natural selection as the evolutionary mechanism probably made little impact, as it was given only to a tiny audience of scientists at the Linnean Society. But Darwin's 1859 book, *On the Origin of Species*, detonated Victorian society like, in the modern world, a flying saucer landing in Trafalgar Square and a little green man popping his head out to request directions to

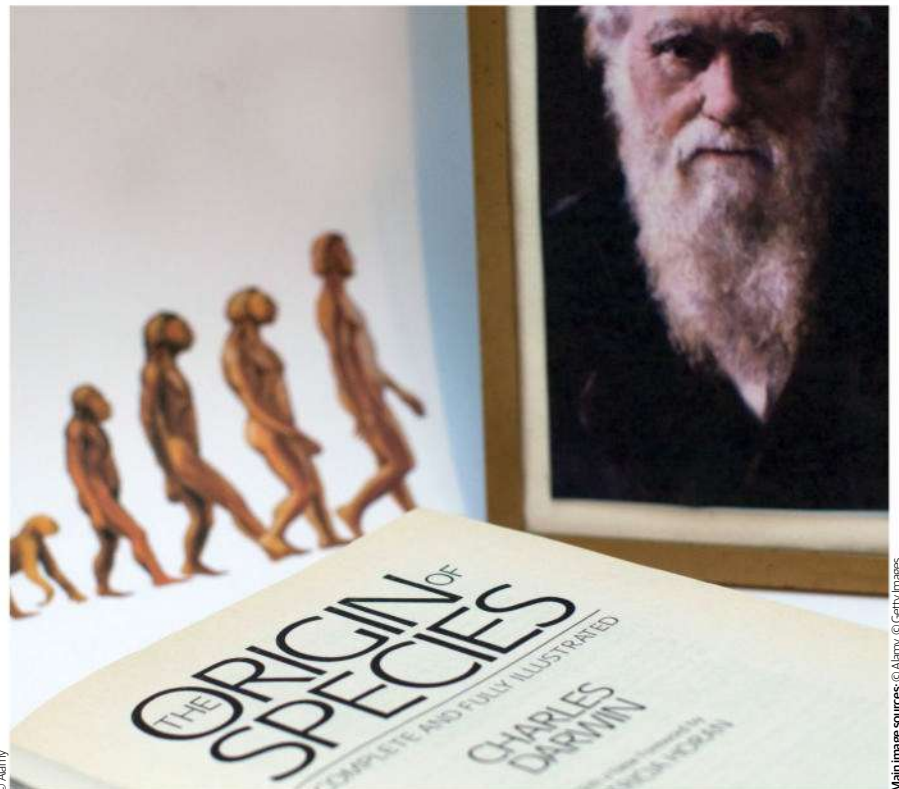
Betelgeuse would. Darwin's book was widely available, easy to read and understand, comprehensive and utterly compelling.

What would Darwin's rivals and critics in the scientific world have to gain from a ban, who were they, and why would they benefit?

Anybody floating a new, revolutionary idea in science can expect ferocious and exhaustive criticism, particularly from the old guard of venerable and learned

professors whose careers are pinned to the status quo. A major driving force in science occurs when a young, keen PhD student tentatively suggests a completely new concept to a noted professor, only to be met by a patronising laugh and casual dismissal. I have personally been in that scenario both as the student and as the professor!

This makes science conservative, and that's good, as it stops crackpot ideas spreading like a virus. If the student is right, and gets enough evidence, they will



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Main image sources: © Alamy, © Getty Images

RIGHT

On the Origin of Species is now viewed as Darwin's seminal work

What if...
ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES HAD BEEN BANNED?



THE PAST

1832-36

THE SEED IS SOWN

It was his voyage as naturalist on HMS Beagle from 1832 to 1836 and exploration of the Galapagos Islands that triggered Darwin's early thinking and formed the foundation of his theories. The variety of species he discovered there that had adapted to their environment inspired and fuelled his research. He began to move further away from other areas of scientific thinking on evolution, and continued his research, but it was many years before he was ready to unleash his theory on the world.



1859

THE BOMB EXPLODES

Scientific debate over evolution was already underway prior to publication in 1859, but in general it was restricted to relatively closed circles of the academic world. Lamarck's theory was based upon acquired characteristics passed from one generation to another in response to a change in environment. It was also more easily accepted as a form of compromise by religious groups as still the work of God. On the other hand, Darwin's style was to make his theory more readable and accessible to a greater public, opening up debate as well as divisions across all levels of society and around the world.



1859-PRESENT

THE BACKLASH

On the *Origin of Species* and Darwin's later work, *The Descent of Man*, were regularly and openly criticised in the press, often in cartoon form. The thought of man being related to animals was a source of great curiosity, amusement and scathing criticism, with Darwin and his work ridiculed.

Discrediting his work had taken many forms over many decades. Even today, despite the general acceptance that Darwin is the father of evolutionary theory, there is still support for beliefs in creationism and intelligent design.



win in the end. In the case of Charles Darwin, he had a very serious enemy in the form of Sir Richard Owen KCB FRMS FRS - arguably Britain's leading natural scientist and palaeontologist. He created the British Museum of Natural History (now better known as London's Natural History Museum). Among other things, Sir Richard invented the word 'dinosaur'.

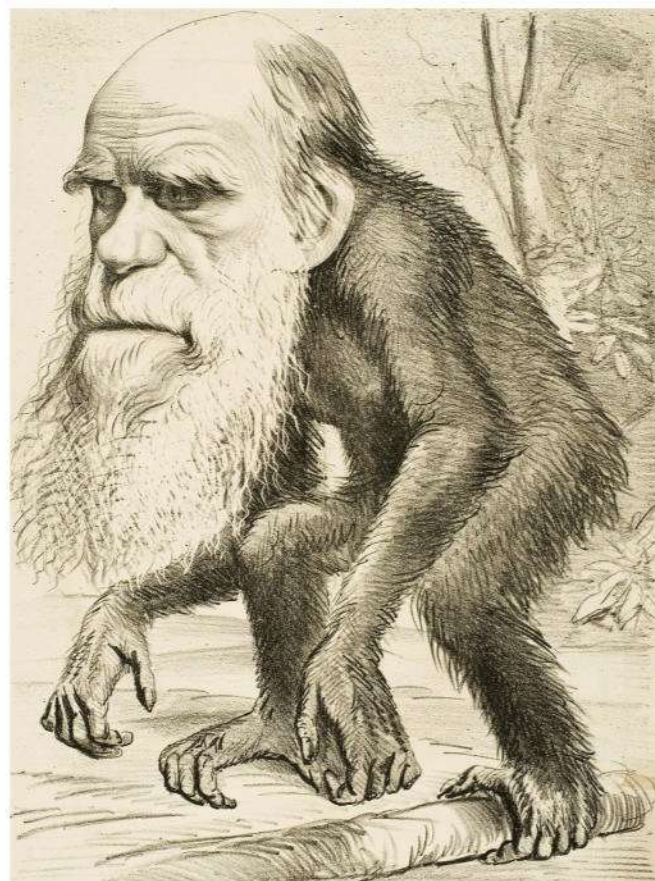
Owen had published his own ideas on evolution that natural selection superseded. Despite his many scientific achievements, Owen was egotistical, incapable of admitting error, and notorious for suppressing and even stealing other people's work - something that eventually got him ejected from the Royal Society's Zoological Council. To Owen's mindset, Darwin was a rival, an enemy who had to be crushed by all and any means possible.

Were there any surprising supporters of Darwin?

Many clerics in the Church of England were quite receptive to natural selection, seeing it as the mechanism by which God had created life. Similarly, a number of Catholic writers also dismissed Genesis as a literal (as opposed to moral) story, and were open to scientific ideas on evolution. Other clerics accepted evolution as a clearly demonstrable event, but supported scientific hypotheses of the mechanism in competition with natural selection. The simplistic idea of Creationism versus Evolution is actually quite a modern schism invented by a number of American fundamentalists in the 20th century.

Would religious opposition to the theory have been sufficient to discredit it and Darwin himself for good?

A question for the historians, methinks, but it is important to note that there are deeply fundamental religious beliefs in some Western and Eastern societies still largely opposed to any scientific results that disagree with their teachings, and that includes evolution. In this, East and West are kindred spirits. One might argue that the development of science as a purely secular activity within Christian



ABOVE
Darwin's theories often made him a figure of fun

LEFT
Lamarck's theory of evolution would be superseded by Darwin's natural selection

Europe depended on the Protestant reformation and subsequent Catholic response, but that is speculation. It is arguable that an undivided Catholic culture might have made the same journey.

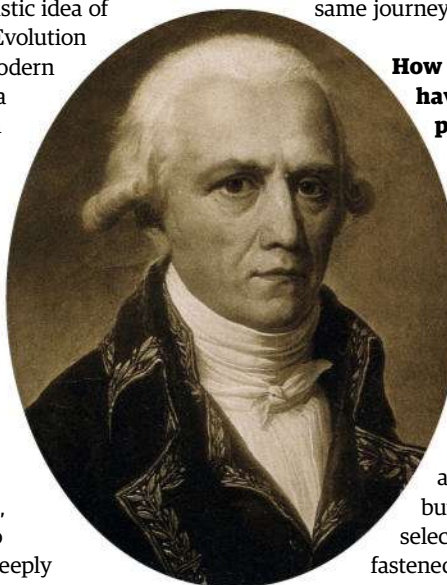
How much would a ban have slowed scientific progress and development in the 19th century and beyond, and what would the consequences have been?

I think history has already answered that question.

Clerics who accepted evolution as a historical fact but opposed natural selection as too secular fastened on the ideas of Lamarck. Lamarckism can

be summed up as the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

An illiterate Russian agriculturist called Lysenko picked up Lamarck's ideas and persuaded Stalin to adopt them as 'Socialist' in the 1920s. Modern biology (and science in general) was dismissed as



'bourgeoisie', and Soviet science became largely conducted from within the gulag, which is where the scientists were sent - those that hadn't been executed, that is.

The impact of Lysenkoism on Soviet agriculture was devastating. Lysenko faked increasing crop yields while 5 million people died of famine in the 1920s, around 8 million in the 1930s, and about 1 million after WWII. Subsequently, the agriculturally rich Soviet Union imported food. Unfortunately, the rot spread. Nothing travels faster than a stupid, failed idea, so Mao also adopted

Lysenkoism, and 30 million Chinese starved to death.

The message is that allowing political and religious leaders to claim that they can control nature through ideology will lead to disaster. The natural world isn't interested in ideology, in the same way that passing laws against discussing climate change won't stop the waters rising - as King Cnut famously demonstrated to a sycophantic court.

Would Darwin's *The Descent Of Man* still have been written and have an impact?

I think *The Descent of Man* depended entirely on the publication and general acceptance of *On the Origin of Species*. Although Darwin had not focused on the human connection to evolution in *Origin*, it was perhaps only a matter of time before that link was plotted and explored, enveloping humans in his overarching theory as another species to which the 'rules' applied.

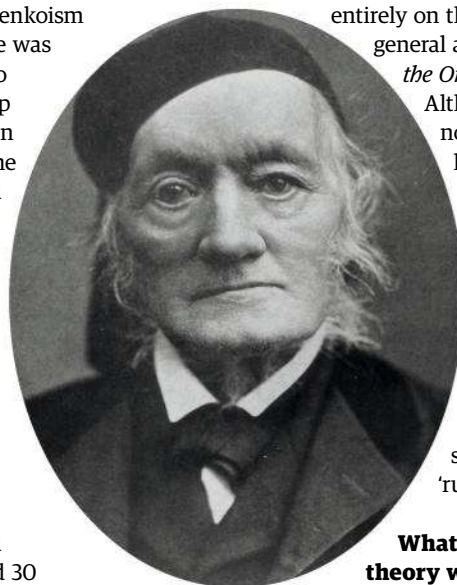
What parts of the theory were open to doubt even today that could discredit the man and his work?

The short answer is none. Natural selection - or to put it another way, variation, heredity and differential fitness - is the core theory of modern biology. It is to biology what, say, quantum mechanics and special relativity are to physics or the atomic model is to chemistry. Core theories are the fundamental scaffolding of science. They are often modified, usually by expansion, but if our core theories are wrong then all modern science is wrong, and rationality no longer applies. If that is the case then we may as well go back to studying chicken entrails.

What major things would we not have today if *On the Origin of Species* had been banned and Darwin had been discredited?

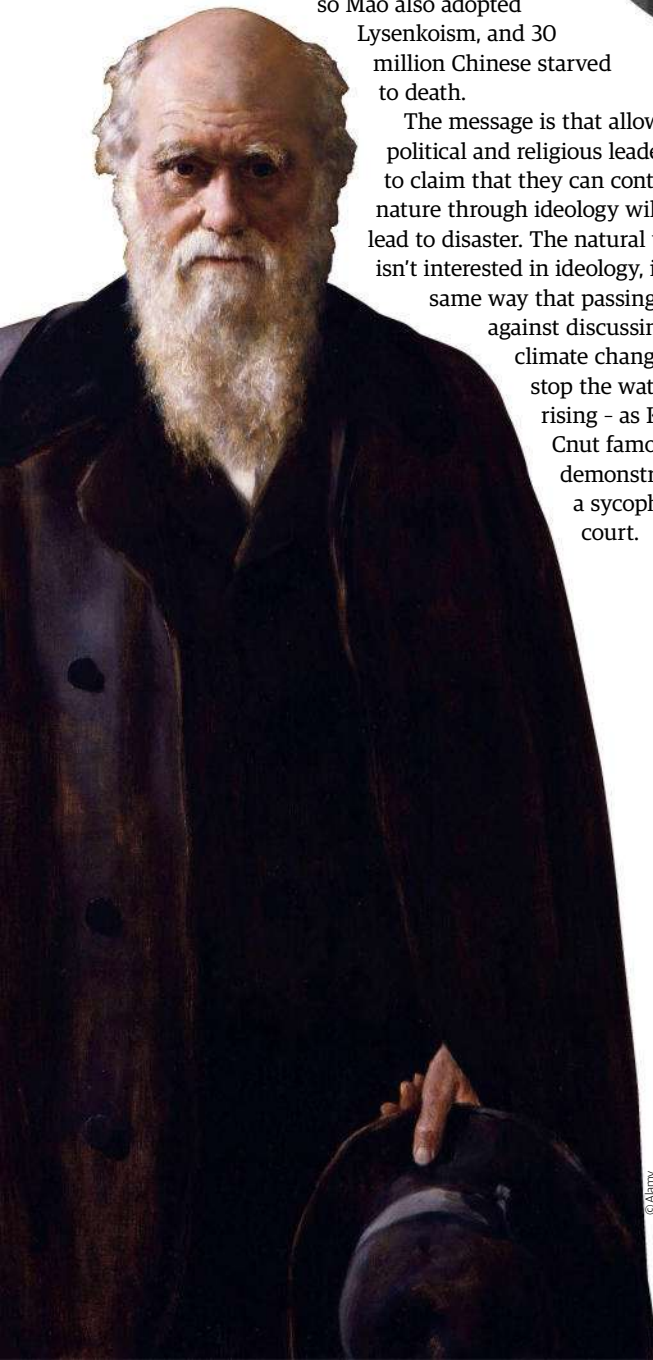
The consequences to our modern society and the development of a global society could have been devastating. We would have lost high-yield agriculture, much of our medicine, any genetic or gene-related technologies, and all molecular biology. Indeed, anything involving modern biology or biochemistry would be problematic.

But more than that, we would have a big hole in our philosophical understanding of the universe and our place within it. We would not understand that there is only one human species, constantly changing and evolving, but always unified in a single gene pool that originated in Africa and populated the globe. That is Darwin's greatest legacy.



RIGHT
Sir Richard Owen was a staunch opponent of Darwin and his theory

BELOW
Darwin is regarded as the father of Evolutionary Theory



THE POSSIBILITY

1950s

THE 'HAVES' AND THE 'HAVE NOTS'

How an ever-growing global population can be properly fed, especially in developing countries, has become a major focus, and without the groundwork done by Darwin, the knowledge and ability to produce crops that are more pest resistant and with higher yields may have developed far more slowly, if at all. Countries unable to produce enough food would forever be at the mercy of those who could supply them, unable to fend for themselves, bringing unstable governments and devastating poverty in an even more unequal world.



1953

BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE REMAIN A MYSTERY

The mapping of genes was one of the major leaps forward in human ability to understand all living things. The evidence of DNA confirms Darwin's central thinking: that heritable variation arises continually and is gradually accumulated. However, without this principle to work from, our ability to harness knowledge of what makes us tick may never have come about, and hereditary disease would continue to blight the future of individuals, families and even whole ethnic populations.



PRESENT DAY

AN INCURABLE FUTURE

Medicines created through the development of microbiology have saved millions of lives and tamed or eliminated many killer diseases. But without Darwin's breakthrough theories to trigger a new way of thinking about the behaviour, construction and development of micro-organisms, such dangers would still plague humans and animals alike today. To constantly be at the mercy of viruses and bacteria, the ability to vaccinate against killer viruses and combat debilitating disease would mean a bleak future both for humans and the species we share the planet with.



What if...

THE TITANIC HAD NOT SUNK?

She was the largest, most luxurious and supposedly safest ship afloat, but her loss was to change the course of history

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Aidan McMichael

Aidan is based in Belfast and is chairman of the Belfast Titanic Society, and co-edits its magazine. He is also chair of a monthly society talk programme to an international Titanic audience.

© Dr Aidan McMichael

Even before a single rivet had been hammered into place, RMS Titanic was destined for fame. Her owners, the White Star Line, ignored competitor Cunard's boasts of speed. Instead, they focused on opulence and luxury to carry passengers from all walks of life across the Atlantic towards the American Dream. Titanic was the largest moving man-made object in the world, and public interest and expectation matched her colossal size. White Star staked its reputation on the ship - all Titanic had to do now was deliver on that promise.

What different events, circumstances or decisions prior to and during the voyage may have avoided disaster?

It is possible to see events around the Titanic as a gathering perfect storm. No one single thing may have been enough to either cause or avoid disaster, but with each event the pendulum swung further against Titanic and the odds of survival became stacked against her. It is in many ways a whole series of 'what ifs'. If Titanic's sister ship Olympic had not ludicrously collided with HMS Hawke in 1911 and needed repairing, taking workers away from the Titanic and delaying her completion, would she have sailed sooner and avoided her fate? If the fire that raged in one of her coal bunkers from the very start of the voyage had been put out sooner would there have been minimum damage to the bulkhead, leaving it more secure? If Captain Edward Smith had been more cautious after his collision on the Olympic with the navy ship instead of overly confident in the potential 'unsinkability' of

the ships, would he have acted differently when captain of the Titanic? Would he have been more reserved with the speed of the vessel and its ability to react to danger? And then there are things which were always beyond the control of the captain and the White Star Line. The unusual weather in the Arctic in 1911 would lead to a larger volume of sea ice and, in particular, icebergs, protected for greater distances in a flow of cold Arctic water that pushed down towards the Gulf Stream. Not only were there more of them, but they were potentially bigger and more deadly to ships of all sizes, even the largest in the world. And what if, instead of handling countless personal messages for passengers, the operators in the radio room had heeded the warnings from other vessels in the area of the threat of sea ice and relayed this to the captain? Perhaps,

despite the loss of face and reputation such a delay [from slowing down] would've caused, disaster could have been averted.

How important would Titanic have been to the growth of competitive trans-Atlantic travel?

Titanic, if she had survived, would have made the White Star Line a robust challenger to its rival Cunard and other shipping lines servicing the lucrative and busy North Atlantic run. Like all market competitors, making money would have meant selling highly profitable rooms in Titanic's first class decks and ensuring they could max out on her third class capacity. Competition, then as now, was regarded as healthy, driving innovation in technology and service improvement for passengers. From what we hear of her maiden voyage and survivor accounts

Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT

News soon spread around the globe at the huge loss of life

© Alamy



A dramatic, sepia-toned illustration of the RMS Titanic sinking. The ship is shown at a steep, precarious angle, its bow high and stern low, with thick black smoke billowing from its four funnels. The ship's name 'TITANIC' and 'S.W. 1912' are visible on the bow. In the foreground and middle ground, numerous lifeboats are filled with survivors, some rowing and others looking towards the sinking ship. The water is dark and choppy, with icebergs visible in the background. The overall scene is one of chaos and tragedy. The illustration is presented with a torn, deckle edge at the bottom.



THE PAST

1912

TIME FOR LUXURY

Having opted out of the speed race for crossing the Atlantic, White Star Line concentrated on luxury and the comfort of its passengers. The Olympic and Titanic were fitted to the highest standards, and not just for the wealthy. It was noted by 3rd class passengers that the facilities and finish below decks were far from basic and much more comfortable than many of White

Star's competitors. Such an investment by White Star was not a coincidence: the rush to find new opportunities in the New World made 3rd class a very profitable enterprise for the company.



1911

LATE TO THE PARTY

It is ironic that the captain of Titanic, Edward Smith, was responsible for causing the delay of the ship's completion while he was captain of Titanic's sister vessel Olympic. Having collided with a navy warship following a botched manoeuvre by Smith, Olympic's repairs diverted workers away from Titanic's construction and delayed the completion and launch of the vessel. Such a change in plan placed the much-advertised maiden voyage of the world's largest ocean liner - and White Star's reputation - in jeopardy. It also dramatically changed the timings of her voyage, putting her in the wrong place at the wrong time.



1912

STAY OFF THE AIR

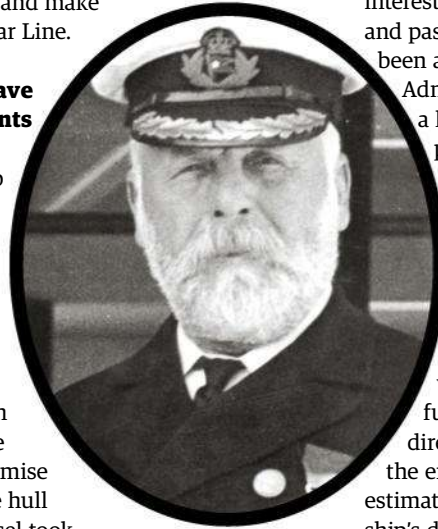
By 1912 the modern innovation of wireless was being used on trans-Atlantic crossings, and Titanic was no exception. The novelty for passengers was to send messages to friends and loved-ones ashore. The operators, who were paid by the wireless manufacturer Marconi, were overwhelmed. The closest vessel to Titanic, the SS Californian, messaged a warning of sea ice, only to be told to get off the air so more lucrative private messages could be sent. Following Titanic's radio distress signal, picked up by the Carpathia at 1.45am on 15 April, the last message from Titanic was: "Come as quickly as possible, old man, the engine room is filling up to the boilers."



of the days before the disaster, Titanic had surpassed first class passenger expectations, so she was indeed set to build a great service reputation and make money for her owners White Star Line.

How influential could she have been to promote developments in shipbuilding design?

Olympic was the actual flagship of the Olympic class - Titanic, her new sister and completed around a year later - was almost identical so her design features had already been showcased and marketed. This included the system of watertight compartments - 16 in all - which ran the length of the ship and were designed to minimise the threat of sinking even if the hull had been breached and the vessel took on water. Each compartment had a watertight door which could be closed manually, electronically from the bridge, or by a float switch should all else fail. Titanic was designed to take on water in up to four of these compartments without sinking. There was also one key feature that was different on Titanic compared with Olympic. Passengers on the North Atlantic crossing reported that they were cold while out strolling on their private deck. Harland & Wolff, the ship builder, listened to that feedback and introduced a partially enclosed deck - a good example of meeting your customers' expectations! No doubt this innovation and her luxurious interiors, had she survived, would have been copied and imitated by other competitor shipping lines



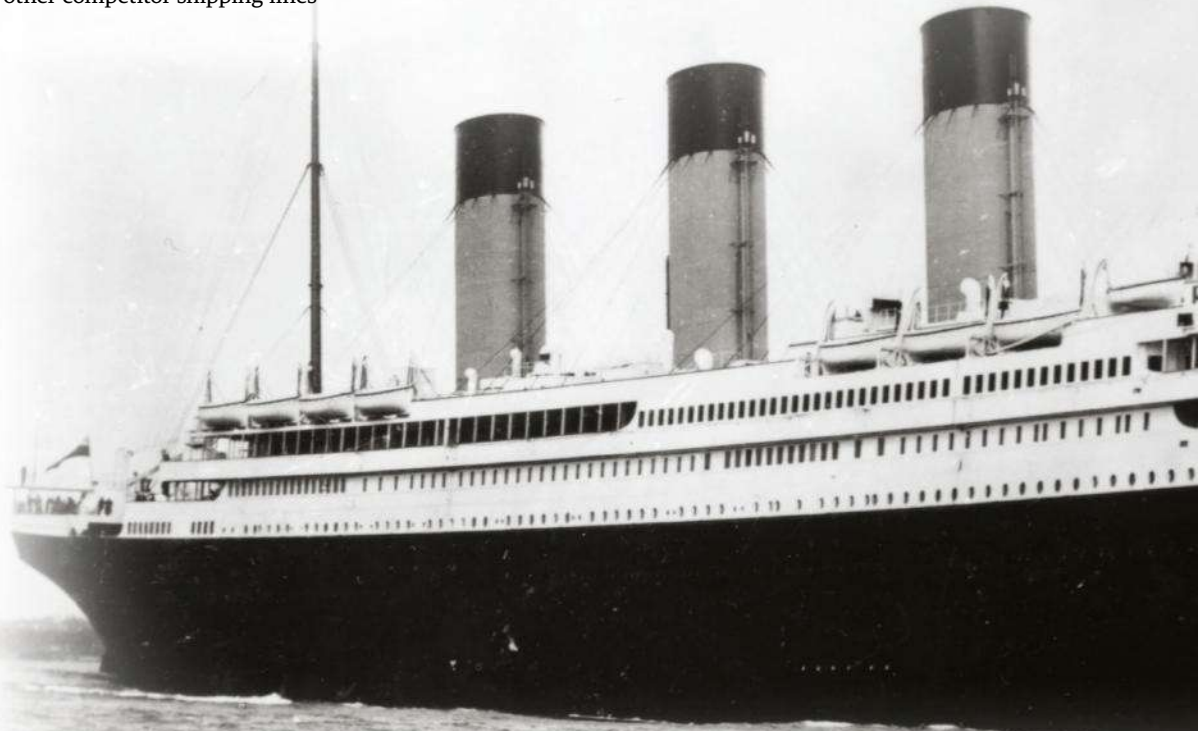
Captain Edward Smith was to perish aboard his ship

What kind of First World War would she have had?

Undoubtedly Titanic would have had an interesting World War I due to her size and passenger capacity. She would have been a valuable resource for the British Admiralty possibly as a troop carrier, a hospital ship or a cargo carrier; and perhaps her pre-war reputation would have made her a prime target and propaganda trophy to any German U-boat. To operate safely she would have been camouflaged - a popular World War I camouflage was 'dazzle' - stripes in various shades of black, white and grey painted over decks, funnels and sides. Dazzle did not directly conceal a ship but ensured the enemy would find it difficult to estimate range, speed and heading. Each ship's dazzle patterns were unique to avoid making classes of ships instantly recognisable to the enemy. What would seafarers have made of seeing Titanic in dazzle camo?

What do you think would have been her final fate and why?

Like Titanic's sister ship Olympic, and like all great liners of their day, she would most likely have been sent to the breakers yard as scrap. The great Atlantic liners were always updated and replaced as technology advanced - later, for example, there was a move away from coal burning to new diesel technology with cleaner and more efficient engines requiring fewer crew and therefore saving money. Olympic was scrapped in 1929 and we



can take a guess Titanic would have been scrapped a year later in 1930 had she survived. One wonders, therefore, with the materials saved from the scrapping of Titanic, would there be hotels and bars with wood panelling from Titanic's opulent smoking room?

What changes in maritime safety happened because of the disaster? Changes that may have been hindered or never happened if Titanic hadn't sunk?

There are a number of key technology and safety features that may not have happened as early as 1912, including lifeboat numbers and wider use of radio at sea. The founding of the International Ice Patrol in the North Atlantic was most likely brought forward by the Titanic disaster. The scale of the disaster created sufficient public support on both sides of the Atlantic to prompt a working-together approach which lead to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention in 1914. This led to the founding of the ice patrol run by the US Coastguard, which continues to provide information and iceberg warnings for shipping. Countless lives lost through iceberg incidents have been avoided all because of the Titanic tragedy.



Jack Phillips, Titanic's wireless operator, remained at his post and perished

BELOW

Titanic was to be the pride of the White Star Line

BELOW-INSET

Titanic survivors photographed from the rescue ship Carpathia



Who on board may have had an influence on history, even in a small way, had they survived?

All the people on board Titanic on the night of 15 April 1912 were 'ordinary people who were about to lead extraordinary lives'. There were many American industrialists whose death it may be said would have some influence on their businesses and in turn the economy. In addition, one individual in particular, Archibald Butt (26 September 1865 - 15 April 1912), was a US Army officer and a journalist. Crucially he provided service to two US Presidents during his career: Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft. At one stage Butt was Taft's de facto chief negotiator on Federal budget issues. Previously he had been Roosevelt's closest companion while in office. Being such an influential character in the life of these US presidents one wonders would the course of history in the USA or even the world have been different if Butt had lived? Would Butt have helped maintain relations with Roosevelt and perhaps prevented Roosevelt's direct challenge to Taft - the founding of the Progressive Party which split the vote and thereby allowed Woodrow Wilson to be elected? Now that would have changed history!

THE POSSIBILITY

1912-30

THE QUEEN OF THE OCEAN

If Titanic had survived her maiden voyage she would have dominated the trans-Atlantic passenger trade. What she would not have been able to avoid was World War I, and she would've been a prime target for German U-boats. After WWI she would have continued to transport passengers from all walks of life to and fro across the Atlantic for many years to come, with the comfort and reliability that the White Star Line prided itself upon.



1912-30

TAKE OFF DELAYED

The first flight by the Wright brothers preceded Titanic by only nine years, and yet by her maiden voyage aircraft innovation had changed dramatically. However distance, size and cost were to keep commercial passenger-carrying aircraft very much a dream until at least two decades after Titanic sank. Had she survived, she would've definitely played a part in meeting the needs of mass transportation around the world, a scale of demand that could not have been met by even the most ambitious airline.



1912 - PRESENT

AMERICAN HEART AND MUSCLE

There were a number of high-ranking, high-flying and influential American industrialists and businessmen who died in the disaster. Had they survived, they would surely have continued to influence and drive the economy and infrastructure of the United States in its evolution as a world-leading economic power. The richest on board was John Jacob Astor, but the list of those lost includes railway executives, a mining magnate, a steel magnate and Isidor and Ida Straus - owners of Macy's department stores. But most passengers were ordinary people and we can only guess at how, had they lived, they may have in their own way changed the world.



All images: © Alamy

What if...

EDWARD VIII HELD ONTO THE THRONE?

How the reign of the 'playboy' king would have tackled a constitutional crisis, and beyond

INTERVIEW WITH



Professor Richard Toye

Professor Toye is Head of History at the University of Exeter. His research includes Britain from the late 19th century to the present day, with a focus on its political and economic history.

What were the circumstances leading up to Edward becoming the king?

Up until he became Edward VIII in 1936, he was the Prince of Wales and was, of course, the son of George V, with whom he had a rather difficult relationship. His father was someone who was very traditional and had a very strict idea about the role of royal duty. By contrast, Edward was really a bit of a playboy who had various affairs with a number of women and who liked socialising and drinking, and really not being the, frankly, kind of unexciting but dutiful monarch like George. In some ways, he was somebody who looked, on the surface, as though he might be a very modern kind of dynamic monarch, which could excite people in the age of the mass media, and yet this didn't really work out because, at the end of the day, he wasn't prepared to put his royal duties before his own personal interests.

After George V died in 1936, what was Edward's short reign as king like starting on 20 January 1936?

Well, there was the famous moment where he went to South Wales, which, of course, was at a time of considerable economic distress, and he saw the conditions people were experiencing with unemployment and so on, and he made what might seem a rather bland remark of "something must be done". This was kind of venturing into overstepping his realm and venturing into the realm of politics. So, for those who wanted to champion him or later viewed him as a dynamic, caring monarch who had been done in by the establishment, this was one of the pieces of evidence that they used, the idea that he was

some kind of radical social reformer. He obviously didn't really have a substantial [understanding of] the existing order of things but it kind of helped create the narrative that he was pushed aside by the conservative establishment.

Why did Edward VIII abdicate after just 326 days as monarch?

Well, there are two different parts of the story, really. The first is that he wished to marry an American woman, Wallis Simpson, who was twice divorced. And this was a bridge too far for the government and, indeed, probably for quite a lot of people in the country. So, I think, at one level, it was simply that he wanted to marry somebody who didn't really fit in with the expected or established norms of

who a king should marry, but ultimately it was that he declined to take the advice of his ministers. And the king's constitutional position means that he has to do that, including in what might seem like purely personal affairs like marriage, because this is something that can potentially affect the future of the state. So, it was partly his genuine obsession with Wallis Simpson but also his refusal to give up that obsession and follow the advice of his ministers. He couldn't really stay as king and reject that advice, and so chose to step down.

Is there a scenario where he could he have continued as king?

Had he decided, 'Well, yes, I'm going to definitely give up this relationship and ambition to marry Wallis Simpson,' then



RIGHT
Churchill was initially a supporter of Edward

What if...
EDWARD VIII HELD ONTO THE THRONE?



“He was certainly somebody who got a lot closer to the Nazis than anybody really ought to have felt comfortable being”

yes, he could have stayed king, and nobody could force him to abdicate. But probably, I think there was a collective sigh of relief from the government when he did abdicate. That's not to say that there was a plot to get rid of him, but George VI, who followed him, was somebody who was much more cognisant of the perceived duties and responsibilities of the monarch and did not cause the government any difficulties at all. Had Edward continued, then some other such incident or crisis could well have occurred again.

How might things have been different under Edward VIII than George VI?

Edward was quite a lazy person who didn't really enjoy reading official papers or turning up and doing the standard

ribbon-cutting ceremonies. He made his boredom fairly obvious on some occasions. By contrast, George was somebody who was dutiful and famously had a speech impediment, which made it a challenge for him to broadcast. George fitted more naturally into the expectations of the role, in spite of the fact that he wasn't necessarily going to be as popular a figure because he was dramatically less charismatic.

Is it true Edward was a Nazi sympathiser, having toured Germany and met Hitler in 1937?

There's scope for arguing about it. You can see him in pictures kind of giving the Nazi salute, which of course, was a common greeting that everybody did in Germany,

and he's hardly the only person to have toured Germany, but I think that his basic enthusiasm is pretty clear. He wasn't exactly an ideologue or somebody who thought about politics terribly hard, but he was certainly somebody who got a lot closer to the Nazis than anybody really ought to have felt comfortable being. And then there is the question of was he, in 1940, contemplating somehow coming back and being restored to the throne by the Germans. Now, the evidence all gets very murky and ambiguous, and therefore, I don't think that you can definitively say that he was doing that, but there are enough questions in the archival record to make you wonder about it. And, of course, Churchill sent him off as far away as he decently could, to be Governor

BELOW

Edward is seen here meeting Adolf Hitler in 1937

RIGHT

Edward may have set the tone for a more progressive monarchy





of the Bahamas [in 1940], to really get him out of the way.

Would Edward have been a threat to Churchill, including his calls for peace with Germany?

I don't think he really posed any threat to Churchill's position, but he was somebody who rather liked Neville Chamberlain, as a lot of people did, and was sceptical towards this new figure bouncing in and trying to do things in a rather unconventional way. Would he have been somebody, who in some way, made more difficulties in 1940? Would he have been for or against Churchill at that point? What would his attitude be, the idea of a compromise peace [with Germany], for example? You could say that his interest in touring Nazi Germany and fascist sympathies were, to some degree, partly at least a product of the fact that he'd abdicated, so you might think his ideas might not have evolved in the same way had he remained king.

Could we have seen a different political leadership heading into the war if he refused to abdicate and caused parliament to dissolve?

If he refused to abdicate, that would be a very difficult situation because he could only marry with the government's permission. I suppose he could have stayed

on and somehow tried to get his case out to the country and created a genuinely larger constitutional crisis. The national government was notionally a coalition, but it was very heavily dominated by Conservatives, who had won a big majority in the 1935 general election, and the Labour Party only had 135 seats. Pretty much all significant MPs agreed about the king's position. There was a small group who might have formed the basis of a so-called King's Party, including Churchill, but would they have really stood a chance at a general election? I think not. So if a general election had somehow come about, I rather suspect that [Stanley] Baldwin would have won it again [in 1935], and he would have ended up in a not totally dissimilar situation to the one that you did have with him then retiring in 1937 and Neville Chamberlain taking over.

Could he have been a successful king?

I suppose there was a way in which he could have made a success of being king. He could have got over himself and decided to do his duty, but do it in a more inspiring way than perhaps George did. In some ways, he can be seen as the precursor of the modern monarchy, which people see as unconventional. He was a precursor of some of the tensions which developed in the post-war monarchy.

Divorce and the line of succession

Dating back to Henry VIII and his attempts to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, leading to England breaking with the Catholic Church in 1534, the monarch has been the defender of the faith as the head of the church in England. For the longest time, the Church of England allowed divorce but frowned upon remarrying while a former spouse was still alive, and as the head of the church, this was an important principle to uphold for the king or queen. And since the sitting monarch needed to approve marriages for anyone in the line of succession, it essentially held for all members of the royal family, too. That is until 2002 when the Church of England changed its rules and started recognising marriages of divorced persons 'under special circumstances'. It is thanks to this rule change that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle were allowed to marry in 2018.



The difficult relationship between the British royal family and divorce dates back to Henry VIII

What if...

BRITAIN SURRENDERED IN 1940?

Nazi victory over Britain would have had a profound impact on the course of World War II

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Charlie Hall

Dr Charlie Hall is senior lecturer in modern European history at the University of Kent and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. His first book is *British Exploitation of German Science and Technology, 1943-1949*.

In the spring of 1940, Nazi Germany launched its devastating campaign into Western Europe. Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and France all fell in quick succession. German forces also developed plans for Operation Sea Lion – an invasion of the British Isles. For a short while, the future of Britain, and of the Allied war effort at large, stood on a knife-edge. Had Britain surrendered, or been occupied, the consequences would have been enormous.

How strong was the political and public support for making peace with Hitler during 1939-40?

During the 1930s, the appeasement of Hitler enjoyed extensive public support in Britain. However, following the Nazi invasion of the Czechoslovak rump state in March 1939, and then Poland in September, the British public generally recognised that Germany could only be stopped by force and began to face the grim prospect of another European war.

This attitude was badly shaken by the rapid German advances and the impending defeat of France in May 1940. At that point, the foreign secretary, Viscount Halifax, urged Britain to sue for peace with Germany, using the still-neutral Mussolini as an intermediary. The new prime minister, Winston Churchill, was determined to fight on. Through some shrewd politicking, and the support of both Labour and his predecessor, Neville Chamberlain, Churchill emerged triumphant.

Churchill's success in Whitehall was matched by progress in the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from

the harbour and beaches at Dunkirk. Taken together, this stiffened the British public's determination to fight. Had Halifax's peace proposal been pursued, it is likely it would only have had a small minority of the public behind it.

Is there anything that could have shifted opinion towards an Anglo-German peace treaty?

Britain's engagement with the affairs of mainland Europe has always been defined by its geography. As an island, the risk of invasion is considerably lower. While a Nazi invasion of the British Isles remained a distant possibility, the likelihood of surrender was correspondingly slim. However, had military developments made invasion more likely, the appetite for a negotiated exit from hostilities may have grown exponentially in Britain.

The most critical of these developments would have been any serious blow to the Royal Navy, as this offered the principal line of defence against invasion. Other possibilities, such as the failure of the Dunkirk evacuation or the Luftwaffe achieving air superiority over the UK, could have had a similar effect. Likewise, concomitant challenges to the British Empire, such as a Japanese attack in Asia or assertions of neutrality from the Dominions, would have undermined British confidence and perhaps reopened peace negotiations.

Did Nazi Germany have a plan for the occupation of the British Isles in the event of victory over the UK?

A Nazi invasion of the British Isles was never more than an extremely distant possibility. Hitler and most senior Nazis recognised this. Their preferred option



Main image source: © Alamy, Getty Images

RIGHT

Members of the Home Guard drilling in preparation for a Nazi invasion

What if...
BRITAIN SURRENDERED IN 1940?



THE PAST

MAY-JUNE 1940

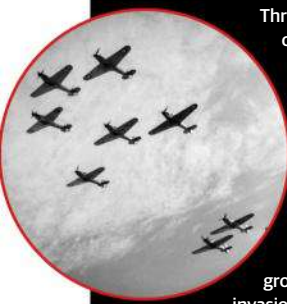
BEF SAVED FROM DUNKIRK



Between 26 May and 4 June 1940, 338,000 British and French troops, including the core of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), were successfully evacuated from the harbour and beaches at Dunkirk in northern France. This evacuation was hailed as being nothing short of a miracle. Churchill wasn't so quick to bask in glory, however, and instead warned that, "we must be very careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory".

SUMMER 1940

BRITAIN'S SKIES ARE SECURED



Throughout the summer of 1940, the Luftwaffe mounted a major campaign to destroy the fighting capacity of the RAF and achieve air superiority over Britain. The aim was to force Britain to sue for peace or, failing that, to lay the groundwork for a seaborne invasion. The RAF and Fleet Air Arm resisted these efforts resolutely and claimed victory in the Battle of Britain.

1940

NAZI INVASION CANCELLED



While Hitler had hoped to force Britain to the negotiating table without having to launch a full-scale invasion, plans were nonetheless drawn up for a German amphibious assault on the south coast of England, known as Operation Sea Lion. However, following defeat in the Battle of Britain, and amid various other concerns, Hitler decided to postpone Sea Lion indefinitely and instead redirect troops to other fronts.

was to make Britain 'see the light', reach a peace settlement, and perhaps even become allies in future military actions. As a result, really detailed plans for occupation were not drawn up.

Nevertheless, from the outline plans that were made we can get a general sense of what Britain (and Ireland) would have looked like under Nazi occupation. To begin with, the Nazis were keen to split the country up into six sections, each with their own military command centre; other ideas were more substantive, such as detaching Scotland and creating a united Ireland.

The broader governmental plans would have likely followed the lines adopted in Nazi-occupied Europe. The Germans would have established a collaborationist civil administration by co-opting sympathetic British officials and politicians and tasking them with implementing policy directives from Berlin. This regime would have remained under the close supervision of the Nazi security forces, reinforced by a heavy military presence.

Which military and/or political figures were likely to be involved in a British collaborationist government?

Top of Hitler's list for the head of a British puppet government was Oswald Mosley. The leader of the British Union of Fascists had fallen under the Führer's spell in the 1930s and was interned by the British authorities in May 1940, amid concerns he might lead fifth column activities against the war effort.

There were many British politicians who had dabbled in fascism before the war and who showed a fondness for the Third Reich. This even extended into the monarchy - the Duke of Windsor (formerly Edward VIII) visited Germany, met Hitler, and supported appeasement.

Nonetheless, few of these figures would have welcomed a Nazi occupation of Britain. Any regime the Nazis established in Britain would have been (correctly) viewed as a foreign imposition and would have received very little domestic support. As with other occupied territories, though, apathy and resignation, suffused with fear, may have proved the most widespread response.

Would civil and military resistance to the occupation and collaboration have been strong or limited?

In the early days of occupation, resistance would have been fierce. If the British government, and by extension the public, had decided to continue fighting,



ABOVE
Winston Churchill and
Neville Chamberlain
in 1940

German forces would have faced a bloody struggle to subjugate the British Isles. Civilians and soldiers, no doubt aided by whatever survived of the Royal Navy, would have worked together and offered a stubborn defence.

If this subjugation were completed, however, the scale and ferocity of resistance would have been shaped by the character of the occupation. A harsh and intrusive administration would have faced vigorous resistance, and vice versa. In any case, this would have taken a variety of forms, from armed insurrection to industrial sabotage to the passive maintenance of British institutions and ideals.

Any resistance would have likely benefitted from supply and support from overseas, especially the Dominions and perhaps the USA. Overextended German forces would have found it increasingly challenging to maintain order in all occupied territories (particularly Britain, given its distance from Germany and its island geography), while also fighting a conventional war in the East. Such difficulties may have ultimately proved too costly for the Nazi regime to bear.

Was there a plan for a British government-in-exile led by Churchill and King George VI?

Had Britain been invaded, the government and the royals would have remained in the country for as long as possible. This would have been vital for maintaining public morale and the armed forces' will to fight. Queen



ABOVE
The Duke of Windsor photographed with Hitler in 1937

BELOW
Hatley Castle, Canada: a royal refuge in case of invasion

Elizabeth famously said when asked about evacuating: "The children won't go without me. I won't leave the King. And the King will never leave."

Nonetheless, a number of country houses were identified as possible refuges if they did have to leave London. Had Nazi forces reached the Midlands, a special army unit (the Coats Mission) would have transported the royals to Liverpool, and a navy ship would then have carried them to Canada. A stately home in British Columbia - Hatley Castle - was purchased in 1940 to serve as a royal residence if necessary.

Churchill and his cabinet would also have fled Britain only as a last resort and again, Canada would have been the destination. The might of the Royal Navy and the size of the Empire would have made it very possible for Britain to continue a fairly substantial war effort, even if the UK itself was subjugated.

If Britain surrendered, how might Nazi ideology have influenced and changed British culture and society?

Any peace which followed a Nazi victory would have likely been temporary. Expansion and destruction were central facets of Nazism and there would have always been new enemies to fight. In addition, territories under its boot (including Britain) would not have remained quiescent for long. As such, Nazi rule in Britain would have been

violent and deeply repressive for some time after the initial occupation.

Another key element of Nazism was its totalitarianism; it sought to control every aspect of the public and private sphere in any country it was active. Nazi-occupied Britain would have been no different. A free press would have been replaced by a colossal propaganda machine. All culture that did not conform to narrow Nazi ideals would have been banned.

Also, Jews and other ethnic minorities would have been persecuted relentlessly. Even a relatively short period of Nazi rule in Britain would have dramatically altered the social and cultural fabric of the country for a long time to come.

What would the ramifications of a British defeat or surrender have been on the war?

The German war machine would have been able to focus more resources against the Soviet Union. That campaign, which saw dramatic early successes followed by a drawn-out defeat, may have resulted in ultimate victory. Hitler would have been master of Europe.

It is unlikely, however, that this would have lasted for long. Growing unrest and resistance in occupied territories would have undermined this new Nazi dominion from within. There would have been external threats too, beginning with the British and French empires. Though the USA would probably have stayed out of the European war for longer had Britain been defeated, eventual conflict with the Third Reich would have been likely.

In any case, the escalating spiral of violence at the heart of Nazism would have finally consumed Germany itself. Nevertheless, the Third Reich may have survived a fair while longer had Britain been defeated, with catastrophic consequences for the people of Europe and beyond.



THE POSSIBILITY

SUMMER 1940

AIR FORCE AND NAVY DEFEATED

In preparation for an invasion, the Luftwaffe successfully knock the RAF out of the skies and subsequent bombing raids cause huge damage to infrastructure and cripple morale.

At sea, a Kriegsmarine feint operation lures the Royal Navy Home Fleet north toward Scotland, while well-laid minefields in the Channel prevent British ships from interfering with the main invasion routes.

SEPTEMBER 1940

BRITISH ISLES INVADED

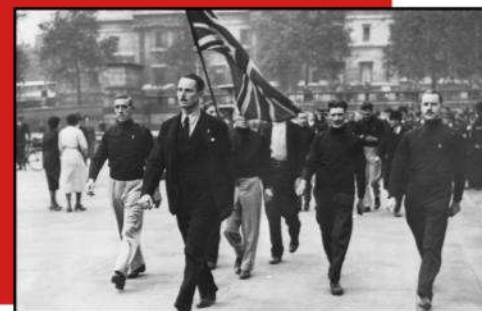
German troops, ferried across the Channel on specially modified barges, establish four beachheads in Kent and Sussex. Amounting to around 67,000 men (across nine divisions) and supported by 3,000 paratroopers, these forces secure key sites, including airfields and bridges. They also take control of the major ports of Folkestone and Newhaven, into which reinforcements and vital supplies can be transported.



1941

FASCIST PUPPET STATE ESTABLISHED

In the face of vicious fighting, London falls to the invaders. The royal family flee to Pitchford Hall in Shropshire, Churchill is captured, and other members of the government seek to continue the resistance from bases further north. Oswald Mosley is freed from prison and installed as head of a puppet regime, under direct control of the German occupying force. He immediately sues for peace.



What if...

THE RAF LOST THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN?

The possible consequences of Britain's aerial defeat in 1940 have fascinated historians and perplexed military strategists for decades

INTERVIEW WITH

Image source: Andy Saunders



Andy Saunders

Andy is an author and researcher who specialises in the air war over Europe 1939-45, with a particular interest in the Battle of Britain. He was a founder and the first curator of Tangmere Military Aviation Museum and is a regular TV and film consultant. He currently edits the German military history magazine, *Iron Cross*.

The Battle of Britain was a critical moment in World War II, a tussle that saw the Royal Air Force and other British services stop the German Luftwaffe gaining air superiority over the UK. Since the end of the war many historians have speculated and debated the possible outcomes if the RAF had been defeated in 1940. This usually centres on the idea that a defeat would have been followed by the Nazi invasion of Britain. Operation Sea Lion, as the German invasion plan was called, could have ultimately led to the complete and irremediable defeat of Britain and her vast empire.

However, while the defeat of the RAF might not necessarily have led to invasion (and if it had, such an invasion attempt might well have failed) it would have certainly set in motion a very different series of events for the remainder of the war.

Why was the Battle of Britain such a critical moment for Britain and Nazi Germany?

By the early summer of 1940 Germany had defeated and occupied the majority of Western Europe, while Britain had suffered the ignominious military disaster of defeat in France, Belgium and Norway. Nevertheless, Britain, its empire and the free Allies still stood between Germany and the complete control and domination it desired. To achieve that goal, Germany needed to eliminate Britain as an effective fighting power. Whether it did that through military invasion, or subjugation by other means, was almost an irrelevance. What mattered, if it was

to achieve any such aim, was to gain total air superiority. In other words, to defeat the RAF – and, specifically, RAF Fighter Command.

While it might be stretching a point to say that only the RAF stood between invasion and defeat, it was nevertheless a fact that the elimination of the RAF as an effective fighting force was essential if Germany wanted to beat Britain – whether that be by achieving the air superiority necessary for invasion or through bombing Britain into submission through uncontested air attacks.

What was the main reason the RAF was able to stop the Nazis gaining air superiority in 1940?

The most crucial element was the RAF's integrated command and control system.

Known colloquially as 'The Dowding System' (after the commander-in-chief of RAF Fighter Command) it incorporated an early warning system through radar and the Observer Corps, allowing commanders to marshal their fighters in a timely fashion and appropriate numbers, and by placing them in the most advantageous tactical position: up-sun, at a higher altitude and aiming to cut off the enemy's approach to target. It did not always work perfectly, but it did allow the RAF's controllers to manage the battle and it thus gave the defenders a great advantage.

What might the Luftwaffe have done differently in the summer of 1940 to defeat the RAF?

Had the Luftwaffe stuck rigidly to its



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Main image sources: © Getty Images

RIGHT

Photograph taken from within a German bomber showing a Spitfire hit by enemy fire

What if...
THE RAF LOST THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN?



THE PAST

1940

RAF VICTORY

By the autumn of 1940 the Luftwaffe campaign against the RAF was beginning to weaken. On 17 September Hitler suspended Operation Sea Lion - the planned invasion of the UK - and 31 October saw the final daylight raid by the Luftwaffe. Although seriously weakened, the RAF had successfully stopped the Germans gaining air superiority over Britain.



1940-41

THE BLITZ

After it was realised the Luftwaffe had failed to gain air superiority over the UK, the Nazis switched to a focus on nighttime bombing raids. Known simply as the Blitz, for several months German bombers targeted major cities and industrial centres, but also the civilian population.

Despite the widespread devastation and loss of life, the British morale remained strong, and the 'Blitz Spirit' of defiant endurance was used in propaganda efforts to maintain support for the war effort.



1942

"REAP THE WHIRLWIND"

Continuing its offensive operations begun during the Battle of Britain, the RAF expanded greatly in the aftermath of 1940 and developed more-effective tactics and technologies to take the fight back to Nazi Germany. In 1942 Arthur 'Bomber' Harris was made Air Marshal of Bomber Command, and began a campaign of strategic area bombing against Germany, stating:

"They sowed the wind, and now they are going to reap the whirlwind." One of the first major bombing operations was on the night of 30 May, during which over 1,000 RAF aircraft bombed the city of Cologne, destroying approximately 13,000 buildings.



ABOVE

A newspaper seller next to a board with the latest 'score' of the Battle of Britain



attacks on RAF airfields (particularly fighter bases), and to infrastructure such as the radar stations, then it would have had a much better chance of bringing Fighter Command to its knees. When it moved away from those targets in late August it did so just at a point when the raids were starting to tell. A relentless continuation and focus on those targets would have finally borne fruit.

Shifting the bombing to cities, industrial targets and ports etc, including night bombing raids, was a grave tactical error by the Nazis because the Luftwaffe really needed to knock out the RAF's defensive capability.

BELOW

London's St Paul's Cathedral seen through the smoke after a night of Luftwaffe bombing



If the Luftwaffe had won, would daytime bombing have increased? And what capacity did the Germans have to increase bombing raids?

If the Luftwaffe had been victorious in defeating RAF Fighter Command, then it would have been able to increase daylight bombing operations and range across Britain at will and relatively unhindered, and it would have had capacity to do so. Daylight bombing was far more accurate than bombing by night - as in the Blitz. It would have enabled concentrated targeting to bring about the destruction of infrastructure, warehousing, docks, communications, manufacturing, remaining military targets, food supplies and more. In this manner, Germany might have theoretically secured the defeat of Britain and its neutralisation as a fighting power without any need for a risky cross-Channel invasion.

What impact might an increase in bombing have had on Britain's war effort and morale?

An increase in bombing (in the event of RAF Fighter Command defeat) might have been catastrophic for Britain's continuation with the war if its ability to manufacture or import was sufficiently depleted. However, in such an eventuality as the defeat of the RAF, there would have been no purpose in the Luftwaffe 'terror bombing' the civilian population. The effort would have been militarily and tactically wasted, although public morale



delight in, "knowing the worst." He also judged that to the British, "the possibility of defeat is neither imagined, nor imaginable." This, of course, was when Dunkirk had been perceived as 'victorious', the Battle of Britain had been won and the population buoyed-up by the rhetoric of Winston Churchill. All of that may have changed if the British population was truly staring defeat in the face.

If the RAF had been defeated, was a German invasion or a British surrender more likely?

Even with air superiority wrested from the RAF, it was not a given that invasion would have followed because such an operation was fraught with danger and difficulty - even with Fighter Command out of the way. Part of the problem for Germany was the logistical issue of getting an invasion force across the Channel because it simply did not have either the right vessels or sufficient numbers of them.

Additionally, the Luftwaffe had lost a huge percentage of its Ju 52 transport fleet in Holland and many key naval vessels in Norway, and with the Royal Navy still immensely powerful its Home Fleet would have impeded invasion attempts. However, the Royal Navy's ships would have been very vulnerable to Luftwaffe attack (particularly from the Ju 87 Stuka) without fighter cover from the RAF. Also, and again without fighter cover, Bomber Command would have intervened.

The occupying force would also need to be fed and supplied, and supply lines may have been challenging.

Was it possible the RAF could have been rebuilt to defend Britain?

Had RAF Fighter Command been defeated, and no invasion or occupation of Britain had subsequently occurred, then it might theoretically have been possible to rebuild the fighter force. However, this would have been contingent upon the ability to continue aircraft production in undamaged factories (there was never a shortage of aircraft, only of pilots) or potentially the import of suitable American fighters - although this would all have taken time.

The rebuilding of RAF capability within Britain would also have been reliant upon the supply of raw materials, that the Luftwaffe did not then focus on the destruction of aircraft factories, and that enough pilots could be trained and made operational in good time.



may have begun to buckle if it saw or realised that its erstwhile saviours, the RAF, had already been defeated.

That said, the Ministry of Information's Home Security Unit monitored morale in the Blitz, and while the reaction of civilians was variable it was over-arched by grumbles and grievances rather than any doom-laden crumbling of morale. One of the leaders of the organisation monitoring morale wrote: "The British are pragmatic and with a stability of temperament, albeit with a slightly gloomy tinge."

He went on to say that they tended towards self-righteous indignation when things went wrong and had a masochistic

ABOVE-TOP

A British soldier guarding a German Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter plane, which had been intercepted over the English Channel and shot down

ABOVE-MIDDLE

Hawker Hurricanes in formation during 1940

ABOVE

Messerschmitt Bf110 bombers in formation flight

THE POSSIBILITY

1940

LUFTWAFFE SUPERIORITY

With RAF Fighter Command crippled or destroyed, the Luftwaffe would have reigned supreme in British airspace. With no fighter aircraft to pose any threat, Luftwaffe bombers could launch a greater number of bombing raids on Britain's industrial centres and major cities. The benefit of bombing during the daytime would have made these raids far more accurate and therefore devastating for Britain's war industry.



1941

BLITZ SPIRIT BROKEN

In a speech to Parliament after the evacuation of Dunkirk, Winston Churchill was able to rally the morale of the public by drawing great confidence from the RAF's successes against the Luftwaffe. The defeat of the RAF during the summer of 1940 would therefore have come as a shock to many, and certainly a dark moment during a war that so far had seen few if any significant victories for the Allies. The unrestricted bombing of British factories and cities would have had a further impact on public morale, as well as Britain's war industry. Though an invasion of the mainland UK may still not have taken place, Britain's factories and port towns would have been heavily damaged during the bombings, greatly reducing Britain's ability to continue the war.



What if...

THE DUNKIRK EVACUATION HAD FAILED?

In 1940 a vast rescue operation miraculously saved the majority of Britain's army, but what would failure have meant in the war against the Nazis?

INTERVIEW WITH



Joshua Levine

Joshua Levine practised as a barrister before becoming an actor and writer. He has written several books on the subject of the two World Wars and served as the historical consultant on the 2017 film *Dunkirk*.

Between 26 May and 4 June 1940, a vast operation took place to rescue thousands of British troops from northern France. The Germans' rapid advance through the difficult and hilly terrain of the Ardennes had outflanked the British forces. Realising that a continued attack would be hopeless, the British launched Operation Dynamo, a huge endeavour to rescue as many troops as possible. The improvised evacuation, involving hundreds of navy and civilian vessels, was nothing short of a miracle. It kept Britain in the war and paved the way for the eventual defeat of Nazi Germany. Yet the success of the operation was on a knife-edge – how might the future of both Britain and WWII have looked had it failed?

What happened leading up to the evacuation of troops at Dunkirk?

Why was it necessary?

The British Expeditionary Force arrived in France at the beginning of the war and the expectation was that there would be a confrontation. The Germans, it was believed, would be attacking through Belgium and, initially, the British Expeditionary Force wasn't allowed to advance into Belgium – the Belgians were remaining neutral because they didn't want to provoke the Germans. When the German attack arrived, in May 1940, it came in Belgium as expected, and the British duly moved forward to the River Dyle, where the two sides met. What was expected was a standoff with two armies facing each other across a series of trenches, much like the previous war. But the Germans were simultaneously

mounting another attack further south. They did not attack along the Maginot Line, a series of heavily fortified defences built along their border with France. Instead, the Germans launched a daring attack through the Ardennes, a hilly, forested area that was not considered ideal at all for tanks. The area was barely defended and the Germans moved quickly through it. By 20 May, German tanks had reached the French coast. After little more than a week, the Germans had almost surrounded the British Expeditionary Force.

Can you explain the plan for the Dunkirk evacuation?

Basically, there was no plan! It was never anticipated that the army would need rescuing. The evacuation was improvised

by Admiral Bertram Ramsay from Dover Castle, where he could literally see across to the French coast. The initial idea was to bring soldiers back from Dunkirk harbour. Ships would be sent directly into the harbour but the Luftwaffe quickly put it out of action. And this is where improvisation reached its height. If you can't lift people from the harbour, what can you do? Well, there's the 10 miles of shallow beaches stretching from France into Belgium. In theory, people could be taken directly off the beaches, but the problem was that the bigger naval and transport ships couldn't get close enough – so initiative was needed. For example, the Royal Engineers used discarded lorries and drove them out into the water, where they were tethered together and a walkway built on top allowing them

RIGHT

Admiral Bertram Ramsay (left), who organised the evacuation, watches Allied aircraft over the Normandy coast in 1944



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Main image sources: © Alamy, © Getty Images

What if...
THE DUNKIRK EVACUATION HAD FAILED?



THE PAST

1940

HITLER'S HALT ORDER

Just as his troops were ready to move onto the beaches at Dunkirk, Adolf Hitler gave the order for them to halt the advance and left the attack to the Luftwaffe. For years this order has generated controversy. It was suspected for a long time that it might have been given out a sense of mercy and that Hitler suspected a show of force would now push Britain into making peace. However, Hermann Goering insisted this Luftwaffe be given the honour of finishing off the British Army. Hitler relented and halted the movement of the Panzers outside Dunkirk.

Partly this was due to tank losses and the worry this could leave the left flank of the advance vulnerable. This decision would give the British troops valuable time to stage the evacuation.



1912-40

FROM THE TITANIC TO DUNKIRK

One of the men who captained a 'little ship' during the evacuation of British troops at Dunkirk was Charles Lightoller, the surviving second officer of the Titanic, which had sunk in 1912. Lightoller survived the sinking when, as the ship plunged under water, he found himself trapped but was saved when a boiler explosion in the bowels of the ship released a blast of hot air that pushed him to the surface. He then stood on top of an upturned lifeboat with some other surviving passengers, constantly shifting their weight so as not to capsize the little boat, until they were rescued. Pictured here with his son, who also assisted in the evacuation, the 66-year-old Lightoller managed to rescue some 130 British soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk in his 58ft private motor yacht, The Sundowner.

Lightoller would live out the rest of his days running a small boatyard and constructing boats for the river police. In 1952 he would pass away of heart disease.



to be used as makeshift jetties. And a lot of smaller boats and ships were needed to lift people off the beaches, so plenty of boat owners around southern England found that their boats were suddenly whisked away. For me, the most impressive improvisation was by a man called Captain William Tennant, who was the senior naval officer ashore in Dunkirk. When he got there on 27 May he realised something had to be done to get people off in larger numbers, because significant numbers of soldiers were starting to arrive inside the Dunkirk perimeter. Captain Tennant spotted the large East Mole; this was a mile-long breakwater, it wasn't a jetty. Ships never came alongside it. But Tennant brought a huge ferry alongside and soldiers found ways to clamber on board. It worked brilliantly.

How integral were the 'little ships' to the evacuation?

There is an idea that ordinary people got in their private little motor boats and came over to Dunkirk, and to some small extent that did happen. A man called Charles Lightoller, who had been the senior surviving officer on board the Titanic, took his own little boat across. But for the most part these 'little ships' were requisitioned in a hurry by the Royal Navy and a lot of their owners thought they had been stolen. As a result, there were civil actions against the Navy for people who lost their boats that carried on for years afterwards! These little ships started arriving in large numbers on 30 May. However, it should be remembered that these ships were, for the most part, not taking people back to England but

carrying them from the shore to the larger ships. Their primary role was to ferry people off the beaches.

Could the evacuation have failed?

There was every chance it could have failed. Churchill initially hoped that 30,000 soldiers would get away and in the end 338,000 made it off the beaches. There were an incredible number of things which allowed people to escape. Firstly, there was the successful defence of the roads to Dunkirk and then the defence of the perimeter around Dunkirk by both British and French troops - many of whom were sacrificing themselves for the greater good. Then there was the generally calm sea and the frequent cloud cover. These were strokes of luck, as was the infamous 'Halt Order' that stopped German tanks in their tracks for several crucial days. A little-known scientific process known as 'degaussing' kept hundreds of ships safe from German magnetic mines. You've got the efforts of the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy, and the work of the little ships. People often forget the work being done by the Royal Air Force. All of these things came together. They're all immensely important and without one or more of them it could all have been different.

If Dunkirk had failed what could the effect on the war have been?

Britain would have almost certainly been forced to seek terms with Germany. Lord Halifax was keen to pursue some kind of negotiation. If Britain had made peace, it would have become - as Churchill said at the time - a slave state. It would

BELOW
Stranded troops on the beaches at Dunkirk during the evacuation in 1940

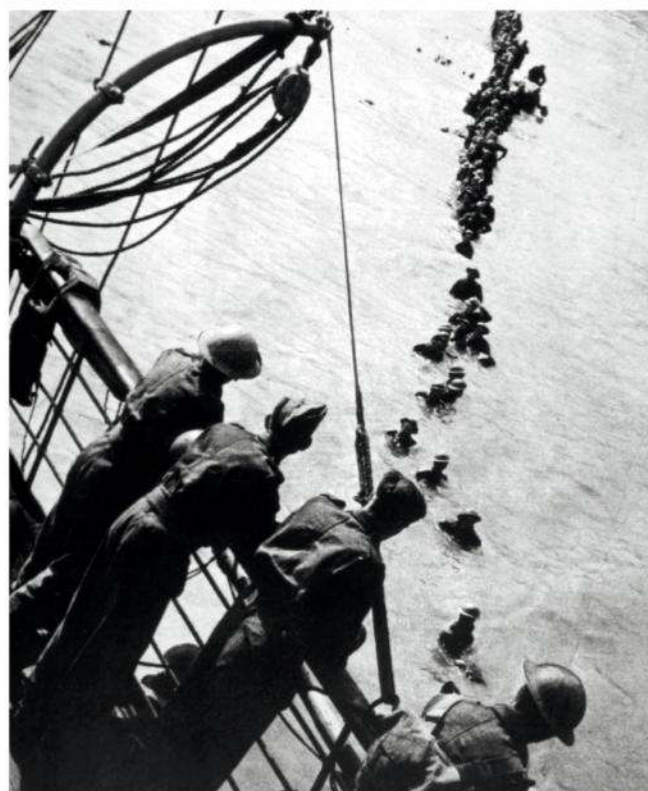




have meant that the war as we know it wouldn't have taken place. Without Britain to preserve freedom and the rule of law then the norms of Nazi Germany would simply have bled right across Europe. Would America still have entered the war? Where would the second front have come from without Britain as a base to get back into Europe? Would Europe have ever been liberated? In America there's a tendency to think of Dunkirk as a sort of parochial little British story that took place before the Americans and the Russians got involved and the real war started. And that's not right. The influence of Dunkirk on the world in which we live is beyond imagination.

What could the failure of the evacuation have meant to Britain?

The evacuation gave rise to an idea known as 'Dunkirk Spirit' which is still bandied about constantly. But in the summer of 1940 it was real and it was organic. The soldiers came home and most were embarrassed. They thought of themselves as the remnants of a battered army, so they were amazed to be treated as heroes by civilians. People were buying them drinks in pubs and slapping them on the back. Families were happy that their sons, brothers and husbands had come home but also they were just relieved that Britain hadn't lost the war. That relief gave rise to a spontaneous release of emotion. Mass Observation reports from the time said that this sudden release of feeling after Dunkirk would rouse the nation. In the immediate aftermath of the evacuation,



politicians in the Cabinet started talking about war aims and what they wanted Britain to be like after the war. *The Times* published an editorial saying British life should no longer be based on privilege but on democracy and freedom. Factory output increased massively. I believe Dunkirk was a turning point that led to the post-war social national overhaul. This is what eventually led to the NHS, free education, to all these measures which grew out of the war. The post-war consensus of making life better for people was kickstarted by Dunkirk and had this not happened, I think it's very possible that these post-war measures would not have come about.

TOP
Evacuated troops arrive at Addison Road station and enjoy refreshments

ABOVE
Troops waded into the water to board rescue ships

THE POSSIBILITY

1940

PEACE WITH GERMANY?

Had the Dunkirk evacuation failed and almost the entirety of the British Expeditionary Force had been captured in France, then it is more than likely that Britain would have been forced to sue for peace with Nazi Germany. Some in the British Government, such as Lord Halifax, had seen this as a viable option and it was during the May 1940 Cabinet Crisis that he pushed for this. Following the crisis, Halifax found himself in America as Churchill's ambassador. If Operation Dynamo had failed, would this plan have become a reality?



1945

NO SOCIAL REFORMS?

Following the end of the war, it was not Winston Churchill whom the British public chose to lead them but Labour's Clement Attlee, whose programme of social reforms remains influential to this day. The National Insurance Act (1946) introduced social security, and nationalisation Acts of coal (1946), electricity and transport (1947) nationalised key parts of British industry. The Children's Act of 1948 introduced a comprehensive child care system for orphaned and poor children. Arguably the most progressive British government ever, Attlee's five-year term is one whose positive effects we are still feeling today. As Joshua Levine describes, without Dunkirk these reforms may have never have occurred.



1948

NO NHS?

Perhaps the most important of Attlee's reforms was the creation of the National Health Service (NHS), which came into being in 1948. Some of the origins of the NHS originate directly following the Dunkirk evacuation, with William Beveridge's 1942 report that outlined societal problems to be faced following the end of the war. Attlee's Health Minister, Aneurin Bevan, expressed the desire that the new health system should be based on three major principles. Firstly that it be for everyone, secondly that it be free, and finally that it would be based on need and not ability to pay.



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What if...

CHURCHILL WON THE 1945 ELECTION?

With the Conservative party in power for another term, how would they have shaped post-war Britain?

INTERVIEW WITH



Anthony Tucker-Jones

Former intelligence officer Anthony Tucker-Jones is a military historian whose works include *Operation Dragoon: The Invasion Of Southern France 1944*, *Kursk 1943: Hitler's Bitter Harvest* and *Churchill Master And Commander: Winston Churchill At War 1895-1945*.

What was the immediate backdrop and run-up to the election?

The July 1945 election was the result of an agreement between the ruling coalition that once victory had been achieved in Europe [towards the end of the Second World War], a general election would be called. Winston Churchill wanted to stay in office until Japan was defeated but was obliged to step down as prime minister beforehand. By this time, the country was very war-fatigued. We'd been at war since September 1939, and Churchill had been prime minister since May 1940. The general feeling was one of relief but also hope that maybe now there could be a new start. There hadn't been an election for some time, and people felt that the time was right.

What was this run-up like for Winston Churchill himself?

Churchill was undoubtedly quite exhausted by this stage. He'd been running the war both as prime minister and as defence minister, a post he'd assigned himself. So not only had he overseen the running of the country, but he'd also supervised the conduct of the war, including defence industries, strategy and diplomatic relations. He'd also travelled an inordinate amount. He'd been around the world to conferences in Quebec, Washington DC, Casablanca and numerous other places. He wasn't a young man, his health wasn't great, and he was tired by the time the war ended in Europe. I'm sure he felt triumphant, but I think if he'd had the option, he certainly wouldn't have fought a general election. It was probably the last thing on his mind and that of the Conservatives.

What were the characteristics of both sides' campaigns?

Clement Attlee and the Labour Party were a lot better prepared than Churchill and the Conservatives. In 1942, Labour brought out the Beveridge Report, which looked at their proposed post-war policies. Therefore, they had given a lot more thought to what would appeal to the electorate than the Tories had. Churchill and the Conservatives, on the other hand, were relying mainly on his wartime performance. Churchill was enormously popular, a highly gifted public orator and had led us skilfully during the war. There was a general feeling that the Tories and Churchill could trade on this, and consequently, they didn't do maybe as much groundwork as they should have done. After all, they

were facing a parliamentary election and not a presidential one, so people weren't voting specifically for Churchill but for the Conservative Party as a whole.

The Labour Party won the election by a landslide. Why was this?

Labour's landslide victory came as a shock to Churchill and the Tories. Churchill is on record as having worries that troops returning from overseas might vote against him, but nothing on the scale of what occurred. The key thing Labour had was well-thought-out policies that appealed to people desperate for a new start. The Tories had a lot of baggage from the 1930s when the economy had not been that successful, and people remembered those pre-war days. Labour, on the other hand, were offering universal education, a family allowance, the setting up of the welfare state and a publicly funded health service. All of these things appealed to the electorate. The general feeling of the country was that it wanted a change, and obviously, that was reflected in Labour winning almost double the seats that the Conservatives did.

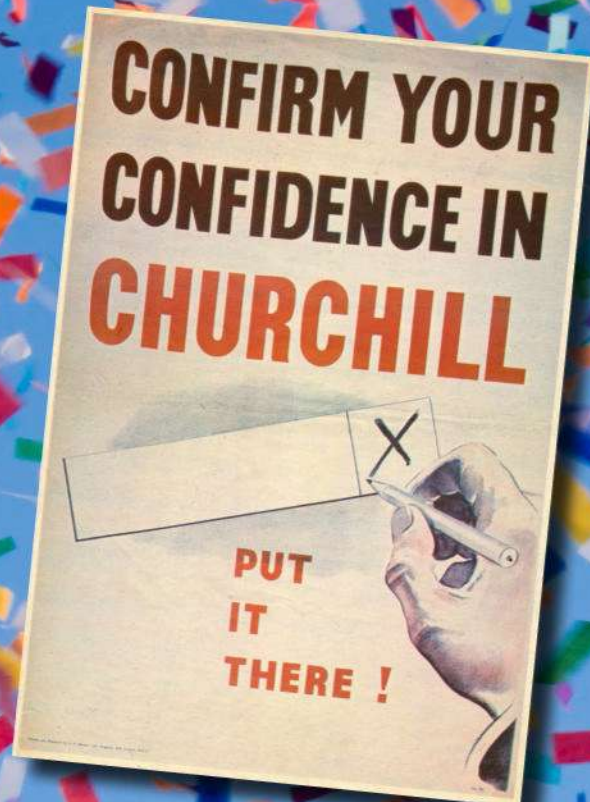
What were the consequences of this?

During and immediately after the election, Churchill found himself in a rather odd situation. While the election was ongoing, he went to Potsdam for a conference with the Russians and Americans on the future of Europe and the Far East once Japan had been defeated. Of course, Churchill took his deputy prime minister with him, who was Clement Attlee, the Labour Party leader. So there Churchill is holding these high-powered talks, and all the while, in



RIGHT
Labour leader
Clement Attlee

What if...
CHURCHILL WON THE 1945 ELECTION?



What if... CHURCHILL WON THE 1945 ELECTION?



LEFT
A mock election held by British troops in Cairo

BELOW
Winston Churchill's passionate campaigning in 1945 was to no avail

OPPOSITE
A British soldier stationed in the Middle East casts his postal vote

“ Churchill was very, very pro-empire and was loath to see India go ”

the back of his mind, there's the chance that he's not going to be prime minister once they've finished. However, long before he lost the election, he had given his support to the Americans that he would back the dropping of atomic weapons on Japan. In fact, he called them the “Miracle of Deliverance”. Although that didn't happen on his watch, he did support the idea, and there wasn't much Labour could do as the bombing occurred immediately after the election had taken place. However, they did ensure that British armed forces were demobilised fairly quickly. But I think for Churchill, the general feeling was sympathy for him, at home and abroad. There was a sense of shock that the country had thanked him for his outstanding premiership by essentially sacking him! I think a lot of people felt sorry for him. However, it is important to remember that Churchill himself carried a lot of political baggage. Throughout his career, he'd held most of the high offices, and people remembered him for positions such as chancellor of the exchequer, where he'd not done particularly well. In a way, his emergency wartime premiership was something completely different to his previous political career, though the latter had prepared him for that decisive moment in 1940 when he became prime minister.

What could the immediate effect have been if the Conservatives had won the 1945 election?

If Churchill had won the general election, there are three key things that he would have certainly had an immediate impact on. The first of these is Indian independence: Churchill was very, very pro-empire and was loath to see India go. I think if he'd remained prime minister, the outcome would have ultimately been the same, but certainly, the negotiations could have gone very differently. Then, of course, he would have almost certainly had an impact on the opening stages of the Cold War. The Allies fell out fairly quickly with Stalin and the Soviet Union, and that led to a stand-off over Allied-occupied West Berlin. This was slap-bang in the middle of East Germany and was reliant on Soviet good faith for communications, air corridors, etc into those parts occupied by the Western Allies. For a while, the Soviets





closed these off, and we ended up with first the blockade and then the dramatic Berlin airlift. If Churchill had been in office, he would most likely have tried to reach out to Stalin. He always believed they had a close relationship and that he could influence the Soviet leader. Lastly, of course, there was the Korean War. If Churchill had been in office in 1950 when that war broke out, it's quite conceivable that he would have committed more troops than Labour did. The UK sent a brigade as part of the UN mandate to force the North out of the South, but it would have been interesting to see whether or not Churchill would have decided to commit more troops than the Labour government.

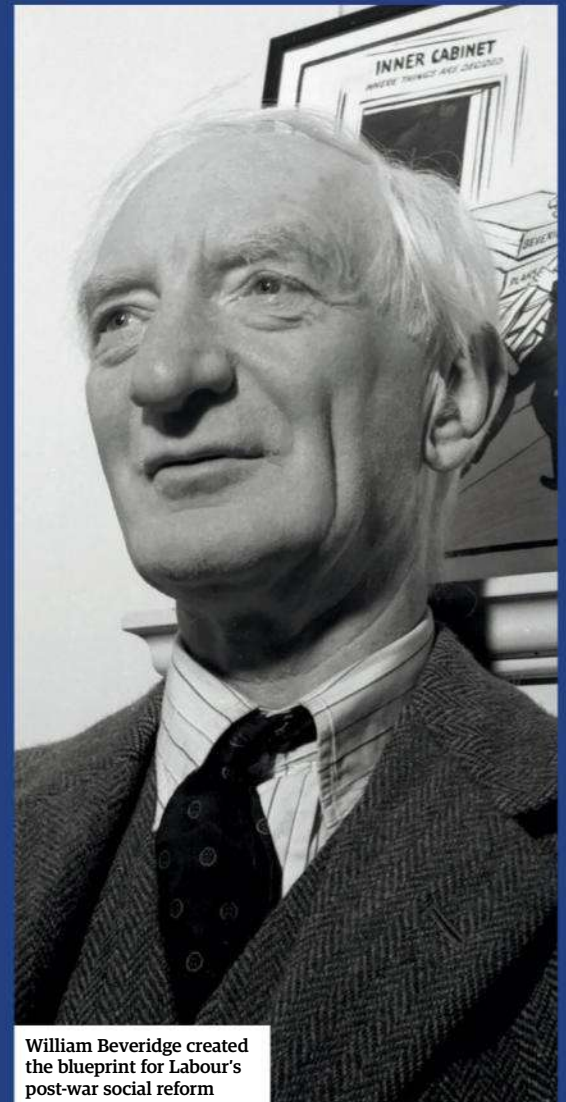
What could some of the wider implications have been, later into the 20th century, of a Tory victory?

In terms of the Labour victory in 1945, certainly looking at it in the cold light of today, the most important thing they did was set up the National Health Service. This has long been held up as an enormous success and the jewel in the crown of British institutions. Most countries have varying forms of private healthcare, but crucially, the NHS is free at the point of

delivery. Would that have happened under Churchill? Well, certainly, it wouldn't be in its current form. Some sort of state-funded health service would have been required, but would it be in the size it is today? I don't know. I think, probably, that's the most fundamental thing. Long-term, the election made Labour a viable political party, which it had not been up to that point. It had been in power but only with minority governments. Suddenly, that landslide victory signalled they were a party to be reckoned with, and it sowed the seeds for what we have today, which is effectively a two-party parliamentary system. The only viable parties that can form governments are the Conservative and the Labour parties. It also signalled pretty much the end of the Liberals. For a long time, it had been the Tories and the Liberals that could form governments, and that came to an end. They were delivered a blow that they never recovered from. Ironically, Churchill had, during his long career, sat on the Liberal benches in the House of Commons, and it was his resounding defeat that sounded their political death knell. It was an outcome that would have made David Lloyd George, the last Liberal prime minister, turn in his grave!

The social reform guru

The main reason for Labour's landslide victory in the post-war general election is down to its groundbreaking policies of social reform, outlined in 1942's *Social Insurance And Allied Services*, better known as the *Beveridge Report*. The report was so widely published that it actually became a bestseller. Created by liberal economist William Beveridge, it proposed widespread social reform to combat what he termed the "Five Giants" on the road to reconstruction. These giants were "Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness". In his report, Beveridge described a "cradle to grave" approach to social reform after his pre-war work for a charitable organisation convinced him that only through such reform could poverty and social inequality be eradicated. The Acts that the Labour government introduced to try to achieve this were the Family Allowances Act (1945), the National Insurance Act (1946), the National Health Service Act (1946), the Pensions Increase Act (1947) and the Landlord And Tenant Rent Control Act (1949).



William Beveridge created the blueprint for Labour's post-war social reform

What if...

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE ACT OF 1946 HAD NOT PASSED?

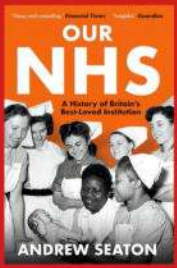
If the legislation that led to the creation of the NHS had failed, the healthcare system in Britain may have looked different today

INTERVIEW WITH



Andrew Seaton

Dr Andrew Seaton is an expert in modern British history. He is the author of *Our NHS: A History of Britain's Best Loved Institution*, out now from Yale Press.



Britain's National Health Service has been dubbed 'the envy of the world' and, despite the various ups and downs across its history, remains a shining example of a universal healthcare system serving the public. Following the landslide victory of Clement Attlee's labour government at the 1945 General Election, he and his cabinet began a series of sweeping reforms that sought to care for the population 'from cradle to grave'. These policies gave birth to the Welfare State, the crowning achievement of which was the National Health Service Act of 1946 and the resultant NHS. But was the act inevitable? If not, what could have taken its place? Could Britain have developed a health system based on private insurance, similar to the US?

What was the National Health Service Act of 1946?

It was a piece of legislation which established the NHS - Britain's coordinated, universal health care system, that encompasses everything from GP appointments to hospital procedures. It's free at the point of use and funded by general taxation. The National Health Service Act of 1946 covered England and Wales, with later acts covering Scotland and Northern Ireland in 1947 and 1948, respectively. The NHS itself came into existence across the UK on 5 July 1948. Historians differ as to why it was formed, with some stating it was a consequence of the experience of the Second World War and the resultant feelings of community. My view is that whilst the war is important, there was a much longer campaign for some form of

National Health Service, which began in the 1910s. During the Great Depression, there was a growing concern surrounding inequality and a belief in the state to address it. But, and this isn't really talked about a lot, the NHS was also designed as a solution to a falling birth rate. This is something that all Western nations experienced from the mid-19th century, up until the 1940s. There was a sense that, if you created some form of National Health Service, then it might encourage people to have children.

How important has the act been in the subsequent years?

Very important. Although the first systematic reform of the NHS in an administrative, structural way took place

in 1973 (and there have been many more since) the principles of the 1946 Act remain largely unchanged. For all the challenges faced by the NHS, it is still a coordinated system funded mainly by general taxation delivering care free at the point of use. This ambition of the NHS endures. There are other interesting aspects of the original act that also still exist. For example, the position of general practitioners within the system. GPs are not technically NHS employees. This was because the British Medical Association opposed doctors becoming salaried employees of the state when the legislation was put forward. And so a compromise was made where doctors were known as 'independent contractors' and that's still the case today.



RIGHT
Wartime Minister for Health, Henry Willink. Had the Conservatives won the 1945 election, would his health service plan been used instead?

What if...

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE ACT OF 1946 HAD NOT PASSED?



What if... THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE ACT OF 1946 HAD NOT PASSED?

THE PAST

1942

FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE

In 1942, social-economist William Beveridge published a monumental report that would prove extremely influential on the later 1946 National Health Services Act. Beveridge had been commissioned by the government to examine the state of Britain's social institutions, ahead of post-war rebuilding. Beveridge identified five issues which he termed 'five giants': idle, ignorance, disease, squalor and want. He outlined a programme of social care that would protect the public from 'cradle to grave'. So popular was the report that 600,000 copies were sold in the first two years of publication alone.



1945-6

BEVAN'S BABY

If anyone could be called the mastermind of the NHS, then it should be Aneurin Bevan. The son of a miner, Bevan grew up in relative poverty in the Welsh town of Tredegar. However, he had a keen intellect and soon won a scholarship to study in London. As a young man, Bevan had come to respect trade unions and became committed to not only their cause but also wider socialist ideals. In 1945, Bevan was appointed the Minister of Health by Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee. In the subsequent year, he outlined his own vision for the NHS that met with government and, later, parliamentary approval when the National Health Services act was passed on 6 November 1946.



1945

BROKEN BRITAIN

At the end of the Second World War, Britain was victorious but this had not come without cost. There was the huge loss of life, widespread destruction from the Luftwaffe's bombs and rationing would continue until 1954. There were also huge problems surrounding Britain's health and welfare services which Clement Attlee, upon his election in 1945, knew his government needed to address.



RIGHT

The American healthcare system remains controversial with frequent protests for change



If the National Health Service Act had not been passed, how might Britain's health services have coped with immediate post-war health issues?

The first point to make is that there was already a very expansive medical system in existence before the NHS came into being. For a long time, the NHS inhabited the shell of this older system which dated all the way back to the Victorian era. So in terms of how the UK would have faced those immediate challenges post-war, it had a healthcare system that it could have relied on. It was certainly different to the NHS, though, and was a mixture of state provision, charity provision and private provision. If frequently criticised, it was not inevitable that this pre-existing medical system would be replaced.

How might Britain's health services have operated for the rest of the 20th century into today if the act had not passed?

One clue we have comes from Sir Henry Willink, the Minister of Health in the coalition wartime government led by Winston Churchill. Willink published a white paper which was a blueprint for a health system had the Conservative Party won the election in 1945. The system proposed by the Conservative Party was actually quite similar to the NHS. So they supported a coordinated system that would have given the universality of health care services to the population, and it would have been free at point of use. But the key difference is that there was no commitment that the government would nationalize hospitals. Under the NHS as it was realised in 1948, the state took over the voluntary hospitals and hospitals run on a municipal level by local

councils. Nor did this 1944 white paper include a commitment to things like providing a nationwide network of health centres, which did start to come into fruition in the 1960s and 1970s. So it's likely that if the 1946 Labour legislation had not been passed, a universal, coordinated healthcare system would still have been implemented, but it would have been much less state-centred than the one that we ended up with.

Could Britain have established a medical system, similar to the current American one?

The short answer is no. The American system, if we look at how industrialised nations organise their healthcare, is an outlier in terms of the central place of a private health insurance industry, let alone the amount of money that they spend on medicine. In most other medical systems that exist in industrialised countries, particularly across Europe, there is usually universal health care. These other systems may require a little bit more in terms of direct contributions from patients, but nonetheless, there is universal health care. So if the 1946 act had not passed, it's highly unlikely that the UK would have gone down a similar route to the US. I actually think we might have developed a system closer to the Swedish model. Sweden has a commitment to universal healthcare, mainly funded by general taxation. But there are some contributions made through direct payments as well as taxes levied on a local level. The whole system is much more decentralised - it's organised primarily through local councils. That is possibly more in the realm of what we would have ended



Basically, what Charnley did was create the procedure where you take out the existing hip bone from the socket and replace it with an artificial one. It goes on to become the most in demand surgical procedure on the NHS. But the NHS is actually fundamental to the way that Charnley's innovation came about. Prior to 1948, Charnley was constrained by having to do private practice to make a living. Once the NHS came into existence, he was able to put more of his time into medical research, which allowed him to develop the procedure. To his credit, he also chose not to patent total hip replacement. If he had, he would have been a very rich man. Instead, he wanted the procedure to be free and accessible through the NHS to the wider population. I think that without the NHS, the UK would not have gone down a radically different medical road where there weren't heart surgeries and there weren't the latest vaccines, etc - but there are these particular moments where the structure of the NHS shaped how particular innovations came about, and how they were subsequently distributed. In that regard, the NHS has historically had an important contributing role to play in the scientific development of medicine.

ABOVE LEFT
The NHS soon experienced some hiccups, with nurses marching for higher wages in August 1948 - a month after the organisation began

ABOVE RIGHT
Sir John Charnley, who developed the technique of full hip replacement. Could his innovation have occurred without the creation of the NHS?

BELOW
Student nurses undergoing training in February 1948, shortly before the opening of the NHS



up with if the 1946 legislation had not passed, given the UK's own long tradition of municipal and voluntary medicine.

If the NHS had not been formed, what could have been the implication for later scientific developments?

If the NHS hadn't been founded and some sort of adjacent type of medical system was in place instead, then the UK would still have followed the general pattern of medical innovation across industrialised nations. The forms of healthcare that patients received would have remained broadly the same. The reason for that is, regardless of how industrialised countries structured their healthcare system, in terms of the actual medicine that was delivered - they're all broadly the same. For instance, there's a shared commitment to hospitals as the pinnacle of medical science, technology and expertise, to the detriment of general practice in nearly all medical systems. Similarly, no country has completely solved the problem of, how do you put public health more centrally into the agenda? How do you best promote preventive medicine rather than just curative medicine? So I think regardless of the structure, the UK would have followed that general pattern and shared in both the benefits and the costs of medical developments.

If the 1946 Act had not been passed, are there any subsequent medical developments which you think could have suffered?

There are certain medical innovations that, without the NHS as a system, it's hard to imagine how they would have played out. One example is the emergence of total hip replacement. This was pioneered by Sir John Charnley who performed the first operation in 1962.

THE POSSIBILITY

1945-PRESENT

A SWEDISH SYSTEM?

Andrew Seaton suggests that the NHS could have potentially followed the Swedish model. Sweden has a decentralised system, managed by the country's 21 regions. As with the NHS, it is mostly funded by taxes but emphasis is also placed on maintaining healthy lifestyles, thereby ensuring the healthcare system and its employees are not overworked.



1945-PRESENT

AN AMERICAN SYSTEM?

If the NHS had never formed, could Britain have developed a health system reliant on wealth and income? If it had, is it possible it might resemble that of the United States? The US system is reliant on private healthcare, where an individual will have health insurance - possibly provided by their employer as part of a benefits package. The specific plan they have access to depends on what treatments are covered with additional treatments requiring an extra cost. Government funded programmes, Medicare and Medicaid provide support for the elderly, disabled or those with particularly low incomes.



1978-PRESENT

NO IVF?

The National Health Service has allowed Britain to be at the forefront of a number of scientific developments. In 1978, Louise Joy Brown was the first woman born via IVF. The technique was pioneered by Patrick Steptoe, Robert Edwards and Jean Purdy, and Brown was born at Royal Oldham Hospital. Five years later in 1983, the NHS was able to establish its first funded IVF clinic at St Mary's Hospital in Manchester. Had the Health Service Act not been passed, how would this research have unfolded? How available would IVF treatments become for the British populations?

What if...

FRANCE HAD JOINED BRITAIN?

Rather than Brexit, Britain becomes the EU's biggest advocate

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Timothy Baycroft

Dr Timothy Baycroft specialises in 19th- and 20th-century France, modern French history and French nationalism. He is also an executive member of the Society for the Study of French History.

In 1956, French Prime Minister Guy Mollet travelled to London with an unusual proposition for his British counterpart, Anthony Eden – would he consider a union between the two countries? France was facing economic difficulties and both nations needed to halt the Suez Crisis. Secret documents unearthed in 2007 reveal how Mollet believed the French people would accept Elizabeth II as their head of state in exchange for common citizenship.

"It's easy sitting in [the 21st century] for historians to say 'Oh, the French would have never stood for this,'" Dr Timothy Baycroft told us. "Well, in the 1950s, yes, they would have. They were still desperately thankful to Britain and the US."

Rebuffed by Eden, the French formed a close friendship with West Germany, ultimately creating the European Union – but Britain could well have played a role,

too. While France and Germany form the backbone of Europe today, things might have been very different.

"Maybe the main axis of European integration would've formed around a Franco-British alliance," said Dr Baycroft. "Maybe having a more dominant role in Europe, and having the leading model being a British one, the level of anti-European feeling wouldn't have developed as significantly."

It was the Treaty of Rome that began the European Economic Community and later the EU. This resulted partially from Franco-German cooperation, but perhaps with more direct involvement, France would have tried to strike deals. "I think the French would have tried to keep making negotiations with as many people as possible. There was a belief in France that Germany had to be built back up, and punishing them like in 1919 wasn't the solution."

Elsewhere, Britain could have convinced France to undergo a peaceful process of decolonisation. In the 1950s, France had already been engaged in a war in Indochina, which evolved into the Vietnam War. Later it was a part of conflict in Algeria that led to Algerian independence. A tighter union with Britain might have meant that the loss of colonies would have been less important to France.

Perhaps most different, though, would have been Britain's place in the world. The Suez Crisis in 1956 saw Britain and France ousted as global leaders. "It was interpreted as the decline of France and Britain as world powers," said Dr Baycroft. "The world powers were the Soviet Union and the US from then on." But had Britain and France joined together, perhaps they could have held their own with the two new superpowers of the day.

How would it be different?

Real timeline

1945

- **Victory in Europe**
Germany surrenders and WWII comes to an end in Europe. Japan follows a few months later in August.
8 May 1945



- **Council of Europe**
The Treaty of London creates a new international organisation in Europe that includes France, Britain and eight other countries.
5 May 1949

Real timeline

- **No union**
Mollet quietly drops any mention of a union between France and Britain, and France decides to look for different allies to maintain peace.
October 1956

- **Suez Crisis**
Britain and France are humiliated in Egypt, losing Western control of the vital Suez Canal under intense political pressure.
November 1956



Alternate timeline

- **France and Britain unite**
France and Britain announce their intentions to form a union, with Elizabeth II as head of state and a common citizenship.
October 1955

What if... FRANCE HAD JOINED BRITAIN?



Treaty of Rome

France, West Germany and four other European countries sign the Treaty of Rome, which creates the EEC. It comes into effect on 1 January 1958.
25 March 1957

Algerian independence

Algeria finally wins its freedom from France but only after a devastating, bloody war that leaves at least 300,000 people dead.
March 1962

France says "Non!"

French President Charles de Gaulle denies Britain entry into the EEC, fearing they will lessen France's voice. They eventually join in 1973.
1963

The Maastricht Treaty

The EU is born. A single European currency, the euro, follows in 1999 for all member states except Britain and Denmark.
7 February 1992

Brexit

In an extraordinarily close vote, the British public decides to leave the EU in a landmark referendum that stuns the international community.
23 June 2016

Treaty of Rome

Rather than partnering with West Germany, France persuades Britain to join with other countries to form the European Economic Community.
1957

EEC says "Welcome!"

A stronger Franco-British Union doesn't view West Germany, Denmark and Ireland as threats, so accepts them as EEC members.
1963

Cultural shift

Thirty years after unification and booming prosperity, a new generation of Franco-Brits are all bilingual and enjoy their shared culture.
1985

Single currency

The euro is widely adopted by members of the EU. London, not Frankfurt, becomes the home of the European Central Bank.
1999

Suez victory

A resolved Franco-British Union regain Western control of the prized Suez Canal, managing to avoid a potentially embarrassing situation.
November 1956

Algeria liberated

Britain convinces France to leave Algeria by peaceful means, giving the country its longed-for independence without any bloodshed.
1962

Three superpowers

The Franco-British Union cement themselves as a third superpower in the global theatre along with the US and the USSR.
1980

EU created

The EU is established in Maastricht, with Franco-British officials taking the lead in the negotiations.
1992

Deeper EU integration

The Franco-British Union calls for the establishment of a single budget, parliament and army for all eurozone members.
2016

What if...

THE BEATLES NEVER FORMED?

Without the Fab Four to stand up to the record industry bosses, the sound of the Swinging Sixties would have been sanitised

EXPERT INSIGHT

Nick Churchill

As well as being a music journalist and critic, Nick Churchill is the author of *Yeah Yeah Yeah: The Beatles & Bournemouth*.

The runaway success of American stars like Frank Sinatra, Johnnie Ray and Elvis Presley ensured that by 1957, Britain's teenage market for short, catchy songs delivered by handsome men was firmly established and clamouring for home-grown talent.

But if a 16-year-old tearaway from Liverpool called John Lennon had decided not to enlist the services of one James Paul McCartney into his skiffle group, The Quarrymen, they might never have become The Beatles. And whatever happened next, it almost certainly would not have preoccupied us for the next 60 years.

A self-confessed know-it-all, Lennon could easily have dismissed the younger McCartney out of hand, no matter how impressed he was that the kid could play *Twenty Flight Rock* and knew all the words. But early the following year, George Harrison joined at McCartney's suggestion and the die was cast. Fame and fortune would soon follow.

Had Lennon ploughed on without them, it's likely that The Quarrymen would have remained a mystery to the world, although after enrolling in Liverpool College of Art in 1957, their leader could well have pursued a more solitary creative path.

McCartney had the chops and the charm to follow his own star and may have done well in showbiz - as a TV presenter, perhaps. Harrison, too, had the talent, looks and ambition to make it - maybe as a guitar prodigy; an Eric Clapton of the North. At

that time, Ringo Starr was making his name as a drummer-for-hire, and would certainly have done very nicely out of that before a later career in acting beckoned, or maybe as a booking agent, or even a life as a promoter.

By 1962, as The Beatles scored their first hit, *Love Me Do*, Britain's nascent pop music industry was hitting its stride. Tommy Steele, Adam Faith, Helen Shapiro and, most significantly, Cliff Richard - Britain's answer to Elvis - were big stars, but they were safe, sanitised and as likely to be popular with parents as they were with the kids. They did as they were told, sang the songs they were given and toed the line.

That was never enough for The Beatles, who from the outset challenged the status quo by writing their own material, then turned their backs on touring and demanded unlimited studio time with complete creative freedom. As long as they remained bankable, the industry was in no position to refuse them. But without them to lead the charge, what would have become of their immediate musical contemporaries?

The Rolling Stones would still have formed, but without Lennon and McCartney to gift them their first Top 20 hit - *I Wanna Be Your Man* - they would either have continued to ape American rhythm and blues, or given in to Mick Jagger's attraction to fame and fortune and churned out a series of Tin Pan Alley hits.

Similarly, the members of The Kinks and The Who would have found one another through London's R&B and jazz scenes, but if they'd never heard The Beatles' early originals, would Ray Davies have co-opted music hall to create a new musical vernacular, or Pete Townshend have found the courage to cook up a rock opera?

In America, Brian Wilson herded The Beach Boys into a maelstrom of creativity as a direct result of The Beatles' *Rubber Soul* album, but without that catalyst, perhaps his demons would have consumed his talent even more completely, making it easier for the group to follow the money.

Dylan would still have happened, but The Byrds would never have married his vision of folk music to a Beatles beat and sounded the West Coast psychedelic sirens, leaving only the dystopian distortions of New Yorkers like The Velvet Underground or Midwestern agitproppers the MC5 to drive the creative imperative.

In a world without The Beatles, something else would've filled the vacuum, as technology drove a new kind of teen audience through transistor radios, portable record players and the telly, but it would've looked and sounded very different indeed.

"McCartney may have done well as a TV presenter"

RIGHT

Imagine all the people... thinking Cliff Richard and The Shadows were the pinnacle of pop music

How would it be different?

1957

● Paul meets John

John Lennon's skiffle group, The Quarrymen, plays a church garden fete witnessed by Paul McCartney, who is subsequently introduced to Lennon.

6 July 1957

● John meets George

Haunted by his dismissal of 'that chubby kid McCartney', Lennon invites 14-year-old guitarist George Harrison to join The Quarrymen.

6 February 1958

● Stones begin to roll

Mick Jagger, Brian Jones and Keith Richards play their first gig as The Rolling Stones at the Marquee Club in London.

12 July 1962

● Ringo approached

The Quarrymen invite drummer Ringo Starr to leave his safe gig in Rory Storm and the Hurricanes and join them. He declines.

18 August 1962

● Stones on their way

Having produced hits for the likes of Jimmy Young and Dickie Valentine, Dick Rowe signs The Rolling Stones to Decca.

May 1963

● Dylan stays true

The album *Another Side of Bob Dylan* is released and its creator is lauded for resisting the urge to go electric and copy the Stones.

8 August 1964

What if... THE BEATLES HAD NEVER FORMED?



● **Jesus stalls Stones**

Reacting to their stranglehold on the pop charts, Cliff Richard reminds fans that Jesus is bigger than The Rolling Stones.
5 August 1966

● **Stones ground down**

The Rolling Stones' career is effectively ended when Jagger and Richards are arrested at the latter's mansion on drugs charges.
12 February 1967

● **The Devil in Iggy**

As The Stooges release their debut album, Iggy Pop says the Devil has all the best tunes because he gave them to him.
5 August 1969

● **Reagan assassinated**

Pop music fan Mark David Chapman, 25, shoots US President-elect Ronald Reagan in Washington in a seemingly unmotivated attack.
8 December 1980

● **Lennon-McCartney, finally**

Local artist John Lennon and vicar George Harrison reform The Quarrymen in Liverpool for their 60th anniversary and invite game-show host Paul McCartney to join them.
8 July 2017

What if...

ARGENTINA HAD WON THE FALKLANDS WAR?

Margaret Thatcher gambled on direct military action. But an Argentine victory could have left both her and Britain's reputation in tatters

INTERVIEW WITH



Professor Richard Toye

Richard is professor of Modern History at the University of Exeter. He has published more than 20 books, including *Age of Hope: Labour, 1945, and the Birth of Modern Britain*.

Following the Argentinian incursion into the Falklands, the move by Margaret Thatcher to deploy a military task force to retake the territory galvanised a nation. Britain seemed to be united in a patriotic fervour and single-minded belief that it had been deeply wronged and was taking action to show it was still a major player to be reckoned with on the world stage. Following the British victory, and a hero's welcome for the task force, Thatcher would refer to the 'Falklands Spirit' for years to come. But with a British failure in the South Atlantic, the global respect afforded Margaret Thatcher might never have materialised, and there could have been serious repercussions for Britain, at home and around the world.

What may have been the impact on global politics and Britain's reputation if Britain had lost?

This depends on the exact scenario. One possibility would have been that the UK's political and military leadership decided that action to recapture the islands was simply too risky, and that it should just be accepted. Another is that military action was tried but failed - possible if the Americans had not given critical intelligence and logistical help. The first outcome would have been easier to survive than the second. Few people in Britain even knew where the Falklands were, and though the issue could not exactly have been brushed under the carpet, it would have been possible to try to manage it diplomatically, and through economic sanctions. This was what had

been tried after Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, and although the Rhodesian question became a running sore in British politics, it never brought down a government. Once a task force had sailed to the South Atlantic, though, the stakes were much higher. Defeat would have been reminiscent of the 1956 Suez Crisis (albeit that was a diplomatic catastrophe surrounding a successful military operation). In terms of global reputation, it would likely have confirmed impressions of Britain as a declining power with failed imperial pretensions. Certainly, it would have been harder for Thatcher (or any replacement prime minister) to present herself as a serious player on the world stage. Although

Britain's impact on the end of the Cold War should not be overstated, Thatcher deserves credit for recognising Mikhail Gorbachev as a Soviet leader with whom it was possible to do business. She was also widely admired in Eastern Europe. It is hard to envisage things turning out quite the same way if Britain had recently experienced military humiliation, though.

What boost would a win have given the military dictatorship in Argentina and how would that impact on the country's future?

Victory would doubtless have given the Argentine Junta a significant boost, but equally clearly it would not have solved the fundamental political, economic,



RIGHT

Falklands sovereignty has been disputed for more than a century

Images: © Alamy, Getty Images

What if...
ARGENTINA HAD WON THE FALKLANDS WAR?



THE PAST

PRE-1982

CLAIM AND COUNTERCLAIM

The issue of sovereignty over the Falklands Islands had been a matter of dispute between Britain and Argentina since the early 19th century. By 1833, Great Britain had established the islands, basically using gunboat diplomacy, as British territory. For more than a century the dispute rumbled on in the background, an ever-present agenda item for British-Argentine diplomatic relations. In 1982, under the military Junta led by Leopoldo Galtieri, the voices grew much louder. Things were not going well at home for the generals, with eye-watering inflation and human rights abuses against their opponents. They needed a glorious victory to reunite the country, and their attention turned to the Falkland Islands.

MAR – APR 1982

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

On 19 March 1982, a group of salvage workers raised the Argentine flag on the island of South Georgia, also British Territory. On 2 April, Argentina invaded the Falklands and later that month had 10,000 troops on the islands. Thatcher's government declared a war exclusion zone around the islands. On 5 April, a British task force led by two aircraft carriers set sail for the South Atlantic. By 25 April, South Georgia was recaptured. The sinking of the Argentine cruiser, General Belgrano, by a British nuclear submarine kept most of the Argentine fleet in port.

1982-83

VICTORY AWAY GIVES VICTORY AT HOME

There were considerable losses of aircraft and ships on both sides, but Argentina could never create the dominance in the air to stop a land invasion. Following an amphibious landing, British troops started their assault. They faced a fierce and determined defence, but on 14 June, the Argentine forces surrendered. Success in the South Atlantic meant a hero's welcome on the return of the Task Force. It also assured victory for Thatcher and the Conservatives in the 1983 election. The reputations of both Britain and its prime minister were intact.

and social problems from which the invasion was designed to distract. On 6 April 1982, around a quarter of a million people gathered before the presidential palace in Buenos Aires in support of the Falklands/Malvinas invasion. Yet they also voiced their opposition to the Junta. The opposition was determined to demand sweeping change once the war was over – whether it was won or lost. Triumph on the battlefield would have given the regime breathing space – but it would not have forestalled its probably inevitable collapse.

In short, a different outcome to the war would not have averted the Argentinian political instability that persists to this day. It is also interesting to ask, though, if the USA could have maintained better relations with Latin America had it not decided to back Britain – a move seen widely across the region as a betrayal.

What would a loss have meant for Margaret Thatcher and for the Conservative Party?

Whereas acceptance of the situation might have been politically survivable, that was not Thatcher's style. Once she had committed herself to taking back the islands by force, her future prospects were inevitably tied to the operation's success. If it had failed unambiguously, she would have had to resign. The question is, who would have taken over? There were a number of able ministers in the Cabinet. Three of them, Willie Whitelaw, Jim Prior, and Geoffrey Howe, had been defeated by Thatcher for the leadership in 1975. Of these, Howe, as chancellor of the exchequer, might have been the most plausible contender, but there could also have been wildcards such as the ambitious environment secretary, Michael Heseltine.

What, though, would have been the outcome for the ideological direction of the Conservatives? In 1982, Thatcher was in the process of converting the party to her brand of economics, but still had to be mindful of the divisions between 'wets' and 'dries'. Howe was fully signed up to the free market agenda but might have lacked the force of personality to drive through radical change by himself. Defeat in the Falklands would certainly have strengthened the hand of those who had long been sceptical of Thatcher's approach, even though her economic policies would not obviously have been discredited by military failure as such. In other words, Tory divisions would have been exacerbated,



ABOVE-LEFT
Margaret Thatcher staked her reputation on the Task Force



ABOVE-RIGHT
General Galtieri hoped victory would settle unrest at home

and if Thatcher had remained on the backbenches, she would have had little incentive to hold her tongue.

What public opinion issues would need to be managed in Britain?

The despatch of the Task Force was accompanied by an upsurge in jingoistic feeling. Defeat in the South Atlantic would surely have led to a sense of crushing disappointment, even betrayal, likely much encouraged by parts of the popular press. This was also a time of mass unemployment and considerable industrial strife. The loss of the war could have had repercussions for Britain's global economic standing,

BELOW
Captured Argentinian soldiers were repatriated



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which would have made these problems even harder to manage. However, Suez offered a precedent for the Conservatives in how to successfully deal with a heavy reputational blow. Anthony Eden quickly stood down on grounds of ill health and his successor, Harold Macmillan, moved quickly to mend relations with the USA, while maintaining a world statesperson image which seemed to suggest that nothing very damaging had happened. Although it is difficult to see exactly how the same trick could have been pulled off in the conditions of the 1980s, the Conservatives have historically been very good at sustaining themselves in power even in spite of major crises and obvious failures. However, the loss of the Falklands would certainly have dented their reputation as the patriotic party, and a new threat might have emerged from the right.

Would a loss have meant Labour won the 1983 election?

This seems far from certain. The Labour Party was extremely divided and its leader, Michael Foot, was not widely regarded as a credible prime minister. If the Conservatives had ditched Thatcher and adopted a more consensual style of politics, they might actually have increased their appeal. That said, the Tories would have faced an enormous challenge, and the prospect of election victory might have led Labour to act in a more united way. It could conceivably have squeaked a narrow majority.

“The Tories would have faced an enormous challenge, and the prospect of election victory might have led Labour to act in a more united way”

However, there is another possibility. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) broke away from the Labour Party in 1981. Prior to the Falklands, it rode high in the polls, and in fact (in alliance with the Liberals) scored a quarter of the votes in the 1983 election. If the Conservatives had been discredited by defeat, and if Labour had failed to solve its internal and policy issues, the SDP-Liberal Alliance could have been significantly strengthened. The first-past-the-post electoral system tends to favour the two main parties. This makes it unlikely that the Alliance would have been able to form a government in its own right unless its performance was truly spectacular. However, if the Conservatives, Labour, and the Alliance had all secured 33 per cent shares, the Alliance could have emerged as a potential kingmaker/coalition partner. Perhaps a Geoffrey Howe-Roy Jenkins partnership would have rendered the Cameron-Clegg coalition historically unnecessary.

How would domestic and economic politics in the UK have looked in the years after a defeat, and since?

Let us continue with the Tory-Alliance coalition scenario. The Conservatives moderate their policies, undertaking only a few further modest privatisations and tax cuts, and making common cause with their Alliance partners in favour of European integration. At a further election in 1987, the Alliance emerges as the largest party and Jenkins becomes prime minister. When he retires through ill health, David Owen, foreign secretary, enters No 10. When the Berlin Wall falls he gains a temporary boost from the 'peace dividend'. But his personality is too abrasive to maintain unity, and though he squeezes out a narrow surprise victory in 1992, the British people are tired with the politics of the centre ground and are instead looking for a new approach. The Labour Party revives and in 1997 wins a landslide victory under an MP from the 1983 intake with radical left-wing credentials. His name is Tony Blair.

THE POSSIBILITY

1983

THE IRON LADY MELTS

It is unlikely, having staked so much of her reputation – and that of her party – on the defence of the Falkland Islands, that Margaret Thatcher would have been able to politically survive an Argentine victory. With loss of face, and faith, in the eyes of the electorate she would have become a liability for the Conservatives. At worst it would mean outright defeat in the polls. At best, some form of coalition with the rising SDP party could be struck. But without Thatcher as leader, or perhaps even the Tories in opposition, pivotal moments in history, such as the Brighton Bombing by the IRA, may never have come to pass.

1981 ONWARDS

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Although the newly formed Social Democratic Party (SDP) was rising in popularity, it probably wouldn't have been able to form a government on its own. That's not to say it would not wield power. In alliance with the Liberal Party, it had shown it could attract votes. With a weak Labour leadership and a fractured Tory party, such an alliance could have squeezed enough votes to govern. If not, then a more traditional pact with either Conservatives or Labour as the power behind the throne, would have meant 'Thatcherism' lost its focus and its relevance.

1984

SOFT LINE NOT PICKET LINE

With British social and economic policy taking a more restrained route, a number of things may have been different. Through the influence of more moderate voices – either from within the Tories or from coalition partners – the push for privatisations of public utilities may never have got off the ground. And industrial relations may possibly have been far more conciliatory. In 1984, the threat to the coal industry through pit closures dominated the news, and the political agenda. Government and unions were locked in a war of attrition, and running battles on the picket lines have become a symbol of British politics of the day. But with a victory for Argentina in the Falklands, this time could all have been so different.



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What if...

THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT WAS NEVER AGREED?

Without the Good Friday Agreement, Britain and Ireland would have seen even more street violence and tragic bombings

INTERVIEW WITH



Dr Connal Parr

Dr Connal Parr is a historian of the working-class politics of Northern Ireland. His book, *Inventing the Myth: Political Passions and the Ulster Protestant Imagination*, was nominated for the Royal Historical Society's Whitfield Prize.

Since 1921, Northern Ireland - with its majority Protestant population loyal to Britain (also called loyalists or unionists) - had been governed from London. In the following 40 or so years, tensions grew as the pro-Irish union Catholic minority (also called republicans or nationalists) suffered economically and politically. This came to a head in 1969 with three days of rioting between the communities in Derry, known as the Battle of Bogside. The following two decades saw the growth of paramilitaries on both sides, such as the IRA and the UDA, and increasing fighting and terror attacks in both Northern Ireland and Britain. This period of unrest and violence is known as the Troubles and claimed the lives of over 3,500 people.

What was the Good Friday Agreement and why was it necessary?

The Good Friday Agreement is an international treaty which was signed on 10 April 1998. It's not a multi-party agreement within Northern Ireland, as only two people signed it: Tony Blair, the UK Prime Minister, and Bertie Ahern, the Irish Taoiseach. It is an Anglo-Irish treaty and follows the 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement as a key linchpin of Anglo-Irish relations. Essentially, what it did was to bring an end to structured violence in Northern Ireland and the Troubles to a halt. It also introduced and suggested levels of policing reform, which were very important to the then-Catholic minority; it arranged for the release, controversially, of certain prisoners, especially from the IRA but also from the loyalists, within

two years; and the main thing it did is to cement what's called the consent principle, which establishes that the democratic majority of people in Northern Ireland will decide its constitutional future. It was voted on by referendum later that year in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the strong votes in favour of it - 71% yes vote in Northern Ireland, and 94% yes, though on quite a low turnout, in the Republic of Ireland - meant it had democratic backing and legitimacy.

If there was no Good Friday agreement, how much longer could the Troubles have lasted?

The truth is that it was at the end of a conflict which had gone on for 30 years. Both sides were exhausted and looking for a way out, especially the IRA. The Good Friday Agreement enabled that process. Without it, it's possible that there would have been a low-level continuation of the violence and IRA campaign

spluttering on into the 2000s. The IRA was keen to avoid civilian casualties and not be seen to be getting into a sectarian confrontation with unionists within Northern Ireland; they would have wanted to do more things in London. For a while, the loyalist paramilitaries would have followed suit. So that's what we would have had a continuation of. You could see that spluttering out, both sides were exhausted and very much relieved to be able to put down their arms, work out political channels, and sink back into society.

What would have happened if either or both sides had voted against it?

I think what would have happened was they would have done what happens with European treaties and other referenda in Ireland, which is to rework it, perhaps on a very superficial level, and run it again. The controversial thing in Ireland was that it led to the removal of articles two and three from the Irish



RIGHT
IRA murals commemorating the Battle of Bogside

What if...

THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT WAS NEVER AGREED?



What if... THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT WAS NEVER AGREED?

THE PAST

1998

AN END TO BOMBINGS IN BRITAIN

The Good Friday Agreement brought the paramilitary violence of the Troubles to an end. Although there were ceasefires called by both sides in 1994, these were broken throughout the 90s, until the signing of the agreement allowed a tentative peace to break out. Although the IRA did not decommission their weapons until 2005, after the agreement was signed and subsequently ratified through a public referendum, there were no more terror attacks on Irish or English soil by either the IRA (the Omagh bombing, carried out by the Real IRA after the agreement, was condemned by the IRA and Sinn Féin) or the loyalists.

1998

POWER-SHARING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

One of the outcomes of the Good Friday Agreement was the instigation of power-sharing, which means that every Northern Irish government must have members from both the unionist and nationalist communities. The government has dual first ministers (one known as the deputy first minister) - one from each community - who have equal power and cannot be in office without one another. This has ensured that there is always input from both communities into government policy.

1998-PRESENT

ANGLO-IRISH CULTURE

Although the histories of Britain and Ireland have always been intertwined, throughout some of the 20th century there was a fervent anti-Irish sentiment in Britain. From the infamous "no Irish, no Blacks, no Dogs" signs that were seen across Britain in the 1950s and 60s to the increasing animosity brought about by IRA attacks on British soil in the 70s and 80s, the Troubles exacerbated the negative image of the Irish. After the Good Friday Agreement brought an end to this, the relationship began to recover and today Irish people and culture are welcomed across Britain, with some of our best cultural output, from novels to music to film, deriving from Irish influence.



ABOVE
Stormont, the Northern Irish parliament building in Belfast

constitution; that was the main sacrifice of the Irish government, to delete those two articles, which lay territorial claim to Northern Ireland. If you're attached to the constitution, as people are in Ireland, it's a big deal to do that, and also in terms of the psyche of the nation - in terms of the nation's sense of itself - that we are on the island of Ireland. I think that if it hadn't passed in Northern Ireland, it would have meant that the unionist side had voted strongly against the agreement, and they would have redrafted the agreement to take into account unionist concerns. And then it would have passed with a reasonably small majority, or a light majority, which would have then been very fragile.

Which community, the unionists or the nationalists, would have been most likely to achieve their aims if there was no agreement?

I think that would have fallen more on the partisan side, on the unionist side. There is always a thing in unionism of a kind of no to this settlement, break the settlement, which would have been empowered by a no vote, to the extent that we wouldn't have had power-sharing of any description. I think it would have been the continuation of direct rule, which some unionists are always calling for, which is government from London.

If peace talks had broken down, would the Troubles have been exacerbated?

No, I don't think so. I think it was winding down, there would have been another form of agreement that didn't have the magic of the Good Friday Agreement's ambiguity and ability to be

embraced by both sides. It would have been this low-level sectarian tit-for-tat violence, which is what a lot of the 90s was, on the ground anyway, punctuated by very large IRA spectaculars in London, or in other big cities like Manchester. The other thing is that we know that the IRA was penetrated by intelligence agents from the British side and was on the verge of defeat from different sides; moving at this point allowed them to save face and claim, if not a victory, at least a kind of score draw in terms of getting the British to the negotiating table. The IRA got quite a good deal, in lots of ways, because Tony Blair wanted Sinn Féin on board.

If the Troubles had continued without an agreement, what effect would it have had on the Northern Irish economy?

The IRA declared a ceasefire in August 1994 and the loyalists followed suit in October of that year. These were key stepping stones towards the Good Friday Agreement because it meant the paramilitary groups and the IRA especially were on board with the peace process. From then, investment started to pick up in Northern Ireland and increased after the signing of the agreement in 1998, though it's still an economy that's heavily reliant on the public sector. Most

BELOW
British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern signing the Good Friday Agreement

RIGHT
A copy of the Good Friday Agreement signed by nationalist SDLP members





ABOVE
The aftermath of an
IRA attack in Belfast

key jobs and most of the middle classes are in the civil service. It's imbalanced towards the public sector in a way that's not the case in the Republic of Ireland, which has seen very strong growth based on the private sector – the multinational companies, the Googles, the Apples of the world who've premises, offices and workings in Dublin, Cork, and other parts of Ireland. The Northern Ireland economy's not strong enough based on the experience of the Good Friday Agreement and its rewards to be able to say that there's been a huge economic windfall. So my view is that it would be quite close to what it is now. It is better than it would have been without the Good Friday Agreement, but it's not much better.

How would Brexit have affected Northern Ireland differently if there was no Good Friday Agreement?

I think that the effect of Brexit would have been very similar to how it panned out, which was to throw quite a big spanner in the works of Anglo-Irish relations. There's no questioning that the Good Friday Agreement had not just repaired but put a real gloss on relations between the UK and Ireland. The governments had already been working together for a number of years and the Anglo-Irish agreement established the principle of work occurring between London and Dublin. But the Good Friday Agreement confirmed a special kind of rapport and a high point in relations. I think that Brexit would have had the same effect, which was to smash that up a bit and unsteady the relations based on the behaviour of particular British prime ministers who were not reliable negotiators, someone like Boris Johnson with whom you'd agree something, and then he would say this really means

BELOW
The crest of the
UDA, the loyalist
paramilitary group



something else. It's not an honourable presence to be doing a deal with; the deal's not sticking, it's a deal being made to be seen to be political. That was a very problematic point in Anglo-Irish relations, and that would have been the case had the Good Friday Agreement been signed or not.

Without the Agreement, how might Anglo-Irish relations look different today?

I think that the agreement has been an incredibly positive boon to Anglo-Irish relations and has been a real flagship of success and cooperation between the British and Irish governments. There was a much-improved dialogue and relationship between the two governments from their low point in the early 1970s that had started to improve a lot, strangely, under Margaret Thatcher, whether she meant it or not. She had quite good advisors and knew that if you have smart people in the room, people who really know about something, they help you come to good decisions. Those people had been improving and helping that relationship, which is a very important relationship between the UK and Ireland, but there's no doubting that the Good Friday Agreement gave it a particular fillip, a particular glow, and that if it hadn't happened, you wouldn't have had the same successful relationship. There was also a big sense in which the Good Friday Agreement helped not just reduce the anti-Irish sentiment but blow it out of the water, to the extent that it became a good thing to be Irish rather than a bad thing. I think the Good Friday Agreement is definitely a part of that and we wouldn't have had that friendliness, we wouldn't have had that social affability that exists between our islands now to the same degree.

THE POSSIBILITY

1998

MORE BOMBINGS IN BRITAIN

If the Good Friday Agreement hadn't been signed, the IRA would have continued their campaign with a greater focus on action in Britain to force them to negotiate. Although they would have aimed to avoid civilian casualties, they would likely have targeted major cities, caused many millions of pounds worth of damage and destroyed buildings, with the high possibility of further injuries or even fatalities.



1998 ONWARDS

DIRECT RULE

Without the Good Friday Agreement and the power-sharing that came about as a result, the unionists may have succeeded in maintaining direct rule: government from London without input from the nationalist community. If this was the case, the nationalist community would have continued to suffer many of the same issues as they had before the Troubles, with the unionists achieving their preferred government to the nationalists' detriment. The ongoing conflict may have worsened relationships both between the communities and with Britain.



1998 ONWARDS

ANTI-IRISH SENTIMENT

With the absence of a peace agreement, the anti-Irish feeling in Britain may not thawed as soon as it did with the Good Friday Agreement in place. The IRA likely would have continued to carry out attacks in Britain, which would have made the situation worse. A greater antipathy towards the Irish may have impacted the embracing of Irish culture and influence over the last two and a half decades and continued to affect the lives of Irish people, and people of Irish descent, living in the UK.



What if...

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Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Bookazine Editorial

Group Editor **Philippa Grafton**
Senior Designers **Harriet Knight, Lora Barnes & Madelene King**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**
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Editor **Jonathan Gordon**
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Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com
www.futurecontenthub.com

Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

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hello@eucompliancepartner.com, +375690241

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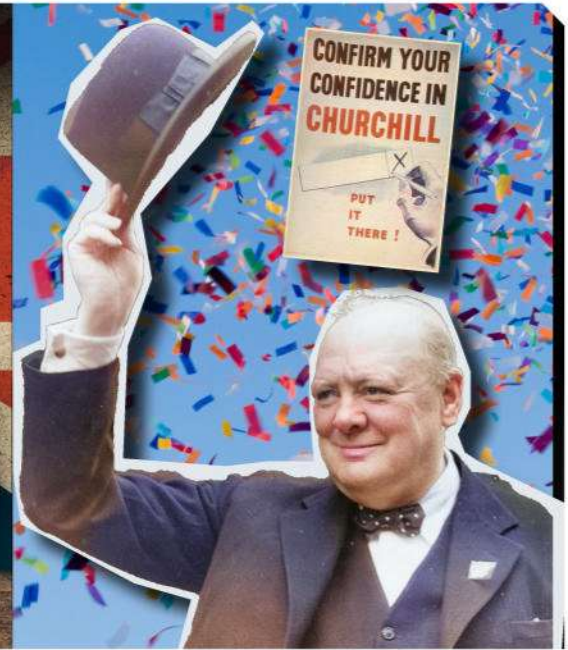
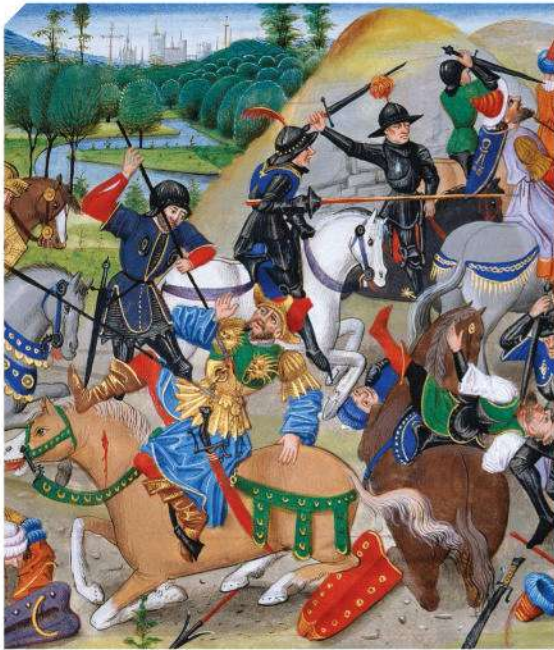
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